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WORKING-CLASS ASIANS IN BRITAIN: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL
AND POLITICAL CHANGES, 1959 - 1979

GRAEME STUART BETTS

MPhil SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES



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TEXT OF ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with working-class Asians in Britain and it seeks to examine and explain the economic, social and political changes that have taken place amongst them since they began to migrate to Britain in large numbers after 1959. It attempts to do this through a Marxist analysis for other theories which have attempted to explain Asians' actions are found to be unacceptable.

Rex & Tomlinson's recent study of Handsworth, Colonial Immigrants in a British City, is examined in detail for they believe that it is based on a class analysis. It is demonstrated that this "class theory" is crude and theoretically flawed and that it has no basis in the empirical situation in Britain. Idealist theories which underlie many of the approaches to studies of Asians in Britain are critically examined and rejected because of their failure to deal with external factors and class divisions. Further, analyses based on these theories are shown to remain only at an empirical level.

A Marxist approach is set out which overcomes the problems noted with other theories and establishes a framework within which it is possible to examine working-class Asians in Britain. The general position and conditions of Asians in Britain are reviewed and examples are drawn from different communities. Changes which have occurred amongst working-class Asians are described and the dialectical relationship between Asians' culture and conditions in the wider environment is examined. Special attention is paid to changes in Asians' work situation and the development of the 'second generation'. Changes in the form of political action Asians have been involved in are examined in detail as this is an area of considerable importance and also to demonstrate the necessity of understanding and explaining the wider environment and its effects upon Asians.

Theoretical approaches to the study of minority groups which did not take the external environment into account in a systematic way located the reasons for changes amongst Asians solely within their communities. This thesis demonstrates that the reason for changes amongst Asians lies in the dialectical relationship between the environment and Asians' culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Britain's population could be divided into white and non-white at one level or at another, Scottish, English, Asian, West Indian, Cypriot, etc. Most analyses are carried out at the latter level although some anthropologists are carrying out studies at an even more specific level.¹ Studies of Asians have usually been concerned with them as a distinct cultural group. However, it will be argued that such an approach ignores class differences between Asians and the effects that class membership have upon them. By effectively taking Asians out of the class system in Britain these approaches fail to properly explain the reasons for their actions.

The Asian migrants who came to Britain before 1962 were mainly uneducated peasants from rural areas who could speak little English. After 1962 when immigration was restricted the migrants were mainly skilled workers, professionals or students. While Asian workers may have links with other Asians who are businessmen or professionals there are differences between them because of their class position which put different constraints on their life-style and life-chances. This thesis is concerned with Asians who came to Britain and took working-class jobs. It seeks to examine and explain the changes that have taken place amongst them since they came to Britain and it attempts to do this through a Marxist analysis.

Were it to be suggested that political action amongst white British workers required an understanding of their kinship, marriage practices, religion, ethnicity or area of origin there would be few people in agreement. However, if this were suggested about Asians in Britain almost no one would disagree even although the majority

of Asians are workers and have lived in Britain for a good part of their lives. Further, they are not "cut off" from the wider society in the way that the Chinese are². nor have they shied away from involvement in politics in the community or at work.

Nevertheless, many studies about Asians have been concerned with them as specific groups in isolation from the wider society. General trends that affect everybody are either left out of the account or are taken to affect different groups of Asians in different ways. It is argued that the composition of these groups is determined mainly on the basis of ethnicity and that they have different interests from each other because of religion or area of origin.

However, Asians, like everyone else in Britain, are influenced by external forces. This thesis seeks to demonstrate that social and political action amongst Asians is mainly determined by external factors. Theories which only deal with ethnicity are insufficient for analysing Asians in Britain. Instead, it is necessary to begin with an analysis of the material environment in Britain. This approach examines changes in the material conditions of Britain over the last twenty years and demonstrates the connections between these changes and changes within the Asian population in Britain. By doing this it will be possible to firmly locate Asians within the material environment in Britain. The first step in this process is to point out that Asians' migration to Britain was not a unique event.

Britain has a long history of migration and by looking at some of these migratory movements Asian migration can be put in a historical context. Irish immigrants had entered Britain from 1800 onwards but they came in their greatest numbers during the famines of 1846 and 1847³. Between 1800 and 1850 industrial cities mushroomed all over the country

and it was Irish workers who provided the labour force to build the railways, roads and canals. The sisters and wives of these men found jobs as domestic servants, nurses and prostitutes. Their homes were the decaying slums in industrial cities.

Competition was extreme between the immigrants and native workforces; for example, pitched battles took place between the railway workers⁴. Irish workers were believed to be a threat to the English workers' livelihood and in some cases the Irish were used as cheap labour and as strike-breakers. Racialist ideas about the Irish came to be widely held. Concerning this Marx wrote:

"In all the major industrial centres of England there is a profound antagonism between the Irish and the English proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who brings down his wages and standard of living...This antagonism between the two groups of proletarians within England itself is artificially kept in being... by the bourgeoisie who know well that this split is the real secret of preserving their own power."⁵.

Marx's view of racism can also be applied to the Jews who fled Tsarist Russia between 1881 and 1891 and came to Britain. ⁶. Most of the Jewish refugees settled in London's East End which at that time was already badly overcrowded. Jewish workers could only find badly paid jobs in the sweatshops which flourished in the East End. Between 1890 and 1900 while unemployment was rising sharply 50,000 more refugees entered Britain. In these conditions racist beliefs began to gain ground, unions were openly hostile to Jewish workers and immigration control became a prominent demand.

The bulk of the Poles after the second world war were directed to "... the heaviest, least attractive, least secure or lowest paid sectors of industry where local labour shortages were most acute". ⁷.

They only moved up the occupational hierarchy after "... restrictions eased and the oppositions of the local workers and unions moderated."⁸. This process was helped by the post-war boom which created large numbers of vacancies thereby giving everyone an opportunity to improve their job except the immigrants who came to fill these vacancies.⁹.

Like the Irish, Jews and Poles, Asians and West Indians had to take the worst jobs on the labour market which in turn restricted their opportunities in the wider society. The indigenous labour movement viewed them as a potential threat for it was argued that they reduced wage levels and broke strikes. They also had to contend with racist abuse. This is the general pattern immigration to Britain has followed.

An important reason for Asians migrating to Britain was that they had freedom of entry because of their commonwealth status. Also, the few Asians who had lived in Britain for many years informed their relatives that jobs were available. The fundamental reason, however, was that British industry faced a major labour shortage in the late 1950's. If jobs had not been readily available there would never have been mass immigration to Britain.

It is important to emphasise this aspect of migration because Asian migrants did not just "happen" to come to Britain, nor were industrialists or the government unaware of what was happening. Traditional sources of labour such as Ireland had dried up so Asians and West Indians were the most readily available answer. In some cases migration was deliberately promoted because of the economic needs of British industry and in general employers were pleased to accept this answer to their labour shortages. ¹⁰. Governments also quickly recognised that migrant labour was cheap because Britain did not have to bear the

social cost of producing it. 11.

By 1974 there were 811,680 Asians living in Britain. Discounting African Asians the other immigrants are mainly from a rural background and mainly unskilled. The exceptions are a small but important group with professional qualifications who are mainly doctors and a small group of businessmen and shopkeepers who mainly serve their own community. The majority, however, are employed as semi-or unskilled workers.

Asians have a markedly different culture from British people. They eat different foods, wear different clothes, speak different languages, obey different moral codes and have different norms of behaviour towards each other and their families. The extended family is the main social unit in Asian culture and along with it goes the notion of family honour (izzat) which can be lost if members transgress the moral codes of the culture. There is great loyalty to, and dependence upon, the extended family. 12.

The reason for migrating to Britain was not so much absolute poverty but rather relative poverty. 13. In the areas from which they migrated there were few avenues open to them through which they might increase their wealth so moving out of that system to Britain was an obvious and successful way of breaking out. Wealth created in Britain could then be sent back to Asia to increase the wealth and standing of the family in the village of origin.

At first only men migrated to Britain and they lived in all-male households. They sent back most of their wages to their families in

Asia but once dependants began to arrive in large numbers in the mid-1960s this became much harder. The last stage in the migration process was to have been to return home but this became more and more difficulty - especially for the young. Approximately 40% of Asians were born in Britain and so for them Britain is their home. Adults became sceptical about the benefits of returning and the thought of the upheaval involved puts most of them off.¹⁴

The vast majority of the early migrants took dirty, poorly-paid jobs as these were usually the only ones available. Even those who had some sort of skill found that they were not called on to use it. This situation had been created by the boom which allowed indigenous workers to move up the occupational hierarchy. The demand was for unskilled workers and since the wages were high most Asians accepted this type of work. Due to the recession and the contraction in industry Asians have been unable to move out of these jobs. Thus, it is the underlying features of the capitalist system which were largely responsible for the jobs and conditions they found in Britain.

At first Asians regarded their jobs as the means to better their life-style at home and their difficulties with language, different customs, etc. forced them to keep themselves to themselves. Once they brought their wives and families to Britain however, they became concerned with bettering their life-style in Britain. Consequently, Asians began to take a greater interest in wages, conditions and hours and they developed an increased interest in the organisations in the workplace. After working in the same sort of job for a few years Asians were much more aware of general work procedures and their position in workplaces.

Where unions exist Asians are willing to join them and in some cases they have fought for the right to be represented by one. Asians have come out on strike in pursuit of their own demands, in support of union principles and in solidarity with other groups of workers. In industries, such as bakeries, which employ many Asians, they are active union members and often the most militant.¹⁵

Some studies point to the changes in attitudes of Asians to their work. It is not the case that Asians workers are solely concerned with problems peculiar to them, such as discrimination or canteen facilities. In fact Asians' main concerns at work are with pay, conditions and hours. They regard unions as the best way of achieving these ends and lend their support to them.¹⁶

In general, they hold the same attitudes about work (for example, about doing shifts or overtime) as any other group of workers.¹⁷ While they may hold ambitions to "set up on their own" they realise perhaps even more acutely than indigenous workers that they are unlikely to get anywhere through the jobs they are doing.¹⁸ Asians' recognition that their interests lie in Britain and their experience of working in Britain for many years has made them realise that they are workers. And, of course, this is even more the case with the youth who have spent most of their lives in Britain.

When Asians first came to Britain ethnic ties were very important. Groups of workers lived together in all-male dormitories and migrants were helped to establish themselves by people from their ethnic group. Their intention to return meant that they did not become involved in their workplace and that their family in Asia remained the focus for

their activities. And even after they decided to settle in Britain aspects of their culture remained very important to them. Thus, Asian workers' actions at first could only be understood through their ethnicity.

Economic, social and political changes in Britain over the last twenty years resulted in changes amongst Asians. Most importantly they became established as workers and their actions then had to be examined in terms of their position in the class structure. External forces brought about this change and also began to alter Asians' traditional religious and cultural beliefs. Thus, any attempt to understand Asian workers' actions has to begin from an analysis of the social, political and economic conditions in Britain.

Asians are differentiated in terms of class and within classes there are ethnic differences. It is their class position which determines in broad outline their life-chances and actions. For Asians to have been able to set themselves up as businessmen and move out of the working class ethnicity would have played an important role.¹⁹ The economic recession made this impossible for most Asians and the vast majority of them have no alternative but to sell their labour power. Thus, to understand Asian workers' actions it is necessary to examine the interaction between their class position and their cultural beliefs and practices.

A number of theories underlie the studies of Asians in Britain and since theory underlies research the first three chapters of this thesis critically examine the most important of these and then set out a Marxist alternative to them. Chapter 4 attempts to bring together the available data on Asians in Britain from 1959 to 1979 and then in Chapters 5 and 6 this data is interpreted from a Marxist perspective.

The central theme of this thesis is to explain the changes that have occurred amongst Asians since they migrated to Britain. These changes can only be discussed in relation to changes in the social, economic and political environment in which Asians exist. That is why both must be examined together. Political action amongst³ Asians is examined in particular detail because it has been studied very sporadically and because it offers a clear insight into the relationships between changes in the environment and changes in a particular group.

This thesis attempts to bring together the existing data on Asians to reveal the underlying trends which run through it. To explain these trends it is necessary to constantly refer to changes in the wider environment for changes in the latter directly affect the former. Adopting this approach would vastly improve the standard of research into Asians in Britain. While communities of Asians appear to be unique this thesis strives to point out that they are affected by general processes common to the whole society and that between different communities trends can be distinguished.

CHAPTER 1

THEORIES OF MIGRANTS AND MIGRATION

Up until the late 1960s the perspective which lay behind almost all studies of migrants in Britain was what might be called the "race relations" approach. It examined relations between black migrants and white natives and held that immigration brought with it social problems caused by colour, race and racial prejudice. The basic problems were the immigrants' difficulties in adapting and the indigenous population's distrust of them. Thus, the problem was reduced to individual or small-group psychology which could be resolved by changing people's attitudes.

Assimilation was a key concept in this approach. It was held that "strangers" entered a "host" society and were then assimilated.¹ Whenever a situation was examined it was in terms of whether assimilation was taking place. Recommendations on how best to speed up assimilation were included at the end of most studies, and complete assimilation was seen as the final goal.²

Race and racialism were regarded as the determinants of the immigrants' social position. Immigrants' physical characteristics distinguished them and this "strangeness" accounted for the distrust with which they were met. The "host" society was characterised as homogenous^e and peaceful with universally accepted norms. Immigrants could only become completely assimilated after adopting these norms and then they could compete on an equal footing with the indigenous population.

While it is not invalid to study relations between races this approach had a number of problems. Although the social scientists who carried out these studies hoped for assimilation the people they studied often did not. Further, Britain is neither peaceful nor homogenous^e

but is instead composed of competing classes. Immigrants entered this situation and became related to these classes in different ways.

By focussing on discrimination and prejudice this approach failed to analyse the social position of immigrants. Many societies have groups in the working class distinguished by race or nationality. Discrimination stems from immigrants taking the low-paid jobs which indigenous workers have moved out of and study should therefore be focussed on immigrants' social position.

In complete contrast to the "race relations" perspective is what could be called the "immigration and class" approach.³ Its concern is the economic and social function of immigration and its effects on society. In this view the social position of immigrants is determined by the function they have in the socio-economic structure of a country if regardless of race or colour. Thus, immigration is viewed as one aspect of capitalist society and the position of immigrants is examined in terms of the class structure of a country.

In this light immigrants are seen as structurally necessary because they do the undesirable jobs at the "bottom of the heap" and because of this their social conditions are also inferior. Further, they may find themselves totally alienated from society because the indigenous working class may believe that they are competing for scarce jobs and resources and unite with capitalists against them.

Immigrants find themselves in this position because of specific laws and practices. Their position corresponds with the interests of

the ruling classes of developed and under-developed countries. In developed countries immigrants provide a reserve army of labour which helps retard wage increases, keeps profits high and weakens and divides the working class. In under-developed countries migration alleviates unemployment so helping to stabilise that society.

Racial prejudice in this view is seen as the means of legitimising and concealing the exploitation of immigrants' labour by treating them as inferior. Immigrants can become the scapegoats for the failings of the capitalist system and so prejudice is a powerful instrument in maintaining the societal status quo. Immigration is regarded as having brought about a split in the working class of Western Europe which has weakened it and increased the power of the ruling class.

This approach allows the material forces which determine the actions of the migrants to be systematically analysed. However, migrants' beliefs, attitudes and ideas are ignored and the aim of migration is not to join the working class of a developed country. Also, the "ruling classes" are treated too simply for in the international capitalist system they are in competition and often pursue different ends. The most serious flaw in the "immigration and class" approach is its inability to deal with specific communities.

However, this area of study has been pursued by the "between two cultures" approach which focusses on immigrant communities at home and abroad so as to establish the effects of migration at both ends of the chain.⁴ Information is being produced which is mainly concerned with the

culture of the migrant group and how this has changed and adapted to the new society. Study of the community in the country of origin is used as a base and information on changes in culture, beliefs and attitudes has therefore become available.

Unfortunately, this approach has dealt poorly with material and economic factors and there is often a complete lack of discussion of the society in which the migrant group is found. It has to be recognised that even if immigrant communities do represent isolable entities they are still located in the social, economic and political scene of a society. Though cultural factors are important this perspective has not integrated the effects of material factors.

Though less common now, it is still possible to come across an "assimilationist" perspective and considerable money is still spent on the "race relations industry" (Commission for Racial Equality, etc). The other two approaches, although flawed, do point the way in which to analyse the migration process and migrants' communities at home and abroad for in any specific migrant community material forces will have a determining effect mediated by the ideology of the migrants.

The analysis of Asians in Britain is very fragmentary. Most of the available literature focusses on Asians' culture and how this sets them apart from the rest of society and moulds their behaviour. Differences between groups of Asians are mainly determined on the basis of ethnicity and there have been few attempts to look at the influence of material factors. It has already been pointed out that due to a concern with "race

relations" many studies have only examined the observable aspects of discrimination and have failed to look beyond this to underlying trends and material factors. An example of this is Wright's study of Asian and West Indian workers.⁵ Although ostensibly tackling the question of the position and role of coloured workers it is in fact an account of "integration", discrimination and prejudice.

It completely fails to tackle the problem of the relationship of the economy to the position of coloured workers in a systematic way. While accounting for superficial aspects of this such as type of occupation or lack of skills, it does not locate the role of migrant labour in the capitalist process and so remains at an empirical level. The whole question of the relationship of immigrants to the working class is totally absent from this study even though it is meant to be an account of coloured workers.

Even the most recent developments in analysing migration still concentrate on one group and the developments within it. While taking a historical point of view they restrict this to the group under study thereby ignoring changes in material conditions in Britain. So, for example, the Ballards have worked out a scheme of settlement for Sikhs which demonstrates the changes within this community since their arrival in Britain. They also argue that it is more or less applicable to other migrant groups in Britain from Asia.⁶

However, these groups are being studied in isolation from the material conditions which surround them. For some of the Ballards' notions

to be correct Asians would have to be cut off from the economic recession in Britain. For example, their suggestion that the last stage in the migration process is the move to better housing in better areas is totally unfeasible for the majority of Asians.⁷

Ethnicity is the key theoretical concept in the more recent studies and this has resulted in an orientation to the religion and culture of specific groups. How people identify themselves and the internal organisation of the group have become the primary areas of study. The problem is that these studies have focussed on these aspects without locating them in the wider social context.

The general problem with these studies is that they have failed to systematically examine the effects of the external forces upon the Asian population and the relationship between Asians and the capitalist system and the state. Ethnic differences are important for they have a mediating effect upon material factors but the cultural practices of Asians by themselves do not determine where they work, how much they earn or where they can live. To begin to understand how these are determined attention must first of all be focussed on the external factors and their effects upon Asians.

A Marxist view of society presupposes a historical perspective. All processes can be demonstrated to have been caused at a certain time and to have developed in specific ways through time. Thus, situations are not seen just as "for what they are" but instead "how they came to be" and "what they might become". The concern is with processes rather than a series of stationary events.

Approaches based on ethnicity are unacceptable and criticism of them is made in chapter two. Equally unacceptable, however, is the type of class analysis put forward by Rex and Tomlinson.⁸ Their position is criticised at length to demonstrate that a Marxist approach is not based on the frequent mention of class. Rex and Tomlinson's approach, because of its crudity, is extremely misleading and does not represent a Marxist approach. There appear to be similarities between their study and this thesis so it is essential to critically examine their approach to demonstrate that it is not useful in the study of Asians in Britain.

Underlying Rex and Tomlinson's study of Handsworth is the belief that increasingly there is a polarisation between West Indian and Asian minorities and British social, cultural and political organisations. In their view this is the present situation and will also be the long-term trend in race relations. They argue that blacks (West Indians and Asians) can be thought of as living in different labour markets, different housing situations and different schools from comparative whites.

For Rex and Tomlinson blacks are not assimilated into the white British working class and instead form an underclass which is in conflict with British society. This conclusion is based on a class analysis which

they have developed to overcome the problems of social class, status gradation, inequality of political power - i.e. the complex situation of the British class structure. They see this as an attempt to avoid simplistic Marxist analyses, notions and explanations.

In Britain, the working class is class conscious and politics is conducted in class terms. For workers this involves a belief in trade unions and the labour party as the means to better their life-styles rather than individual mobility. It also means that workers turn to their industrial workmates for aid. Further, Rex and Tomlinson stress the power that workers can bring to bear upon employers, local councils and government decisions through trade unions and the Labour Party.

Workers' activity has won them welfare rights but paradoxically these gains have temporarily stabilised the capitalist system. Rex and Tomlinson believe that solidarity for the purposes of conflict persists although the new opportunities for individual social mobility are utilised. "... as though the system was not merely a class system but a status-system"⁹. Workers, therefore, do not always act in the interests of working class solidarity nor is there general class conflict. Rex and Tomlinson argue that housing conflict, industrial conflict and educational conflict take place in different arenas between which no connections have been demonstrated to exist.¹⁰

Britain is part of the wider "imperial social system" and Rex and Tomlinson suggest that

"... the two parts of the system, metropolitan and colonial, have been separated from each other by a caste-like barrier, and that, despite the class struggle which goes on between classes in the metropolitan sector, these classes unite in the exploitation of, and in defence against, any threat from segments or groups within or from colonial society."¹¹.

This has important implications for relations between immigrants and the working class.

To assess the assimilation of immigrants in Britain Rex and Tomlinson believe specific areas should be examined: whether immigrants enjoy the same rights as fellow workers; whether immigrants' group-consciousness, sense of identity and group attachment is organised on an ethnic basis or transferred to class and status-based British groups; whether immigrants can gain acceptance and equality of treatment while maintaining their cultural identity; and whether the class-consciousness of British social classes excludes immigrants as potential members.¹²

In the fields of employment, housing and education immigrants are found to be in a less privileged position than white British workers according to Rex and Tomlinson. On this basis they argue that immigrants form an "underclass". Because of the jobs they are mainly found in immigrants do not benefit as much from unions as white British workers. Rex and Tomlinson do not believe that they constitute a focus for immigrants' lives as they do for white British workers and instead they see the organising principle as the neighbourhood and its defence against the outside world.

Class and race conflict in contemporary Britain is characterised by a polarisation between the native working class which is organised through trade unions and the wider political labour movement and supports nationalistic and racist politics on the one hand and immigrants and their children on the other who are organised through community organisations leading to ethnic class organisations which support the Third World Revolution, colonial nationalism, black consciousness, etc. Thus, for Rex

and Tomlinson the native working class are pulled towards Britain and the immigrants to their homelands.¹³.

They believe that a class formation amongst the working class and the lower middle class may develop against the "colonial intruders" and that

"... if this conception of a class interest has some foundation in the social structure of a capitalist empire, ... similar formations will occur amongst the immigrants themselves."¹⁴.

This is likely to occur if differences in life chances between immigrants and natives is sustained over a period for

"... consciousness of a common identity, common exploitation and oppression, and a common conflict with the host society would emerge and find expression in some kind of ethnic-class for itself."¹⁵.

Discrimination and racism arose because white British people were brought up with the belief in the Empire and the inferiority of colonials. Lower middle and working-class people therefore felt destituted because of colonials moving into their areas and because they had to accept them as equals, as fellow workers and neighbours. British people had many fears and anxieties which arose from their beliefs but since these were not "brought out into the open" they responded with hostility and aggression. Once racist beliefs were established they led to discrimination and the discrimination produced conditions which further justified the beliefs.¹⁶.

Increasing conflict is a major theme in Rex and Tomlinson's study and they see it arising in a number of ways. Street battles, for example, are a symbol that immigrants have been stigmatised as an inferior group and

that some of them are fighting to win respect for themselves and the "ordinary legal, political and social rights of Englishmen"¹⁷. The case of Grunwicks demonstrates that "...industrial disputes involving immigrant workers can spill over into street violence"¹⁸.

Referring to Handsworth Rex and Tomlinson see "... the escalation of conflict and the formation of class-like groups for the pursuit of that conflict"¹⁹. Instead of incorporation into the working class immigrants will need to seek a separate identity to defend their own interests. They argue that this conflict can be seen as a "... dramatic representation of the conflict in the whole of a society which can be seen as in the process of creating an immigrant underclass".²⁰

Although they usually discuss blacks in general Rex and Tomlinson do look at Asians specifically in some cases and these are worth noting for they contradict many of the arguments put forward in this thesis. They argue that "... the Asian immigrant never envisages anything other than maintaining his own cultural and social order in a strange land." Further,

"Unlike the West Indian he does not complain of discrimination, simply because his goals are such that he does not place such a high value on the goods which discrimination would deny him"²¹

though they do not wish to press this point too far.

Rex and Tomlinson suggest that Asians have gained some success from accepting discrimination and adopting a pariah role.²² They believe that if immigrants or their children "... were to develop aspirations to better jobs than they now seek, the extent of the discrimination barrier would quickly become apparent".²³ But British society does offer access to education

and well-paid jobs and so a common frame of reference and the basis for fighting for rights by political methods within British society.²⁴

In the housing situation Rex and Tomlinson argue that a higher proportion of Asians than white British in the lower social classes are "forced to buy" houses.²⁵ Further, white British people can get rented houses through their personal contacts whereas Asians have to produce hard cash. Similarly, "... whites set their children up in jobs with people they know. The Asian has to have a certificate".²⁶ They also suggest that because whites are more confident of finding jobs they rely less on education than do Asians who value education more.²⁷

Asian migrants mainly came to Britain because of the better economic prospects and their value system is linked to the values of the "... extended family and the importance of maintaining its wealth and strength".²⁸ While noting this Rex and Tomlinson argue that:

"To be ... a peasant or peddler in India, Pakistan or Bangladesh, was a miserable existence indeed, and it was inevitable that some of the more ambitious amongst them would seek an existence in the advanced industrial countries, either permanently, or as a means of accumulating capital."²⁹

Further they argue that:

"The key to the Asians' situation is the Asian immigrant's acceptance of the inevitability of his having to live in the diaspora. There is really no better alternative to him in his homeland."³⁰

On this basis Rex and Tomlinson conclude that immigrants have a different position in employment, housing and schooling and have not been absorbed into or have equal rights with the working class. They are stigmatised as "unwanted" and "threatening" by the working class which has united with other classes against them. Immigrants have developed self-help organisations

separate from the working class which amongst Asians takes the form of individual capital accumulation and social mobility. Lastly, this conflict should be understood in terms "...of a wider perspective of the readjustment of classes , groups and segments, which occurs with the collapse of the imperial social structure"³¹.

Rex and Tomlinson make a number of assertions which, through their failure to support them, cannot be accepted. One of the most crucial is their belief that there is some sort of unity between West Indians and Asians. In some cases there is unity between the two, for example on a picket line or on an anti-racism demonstration but this does not mean that they have the same experiences in Britain or react to the external environment in the same way. Because of their position as migrant workers there are similarities between them but this is due to their relationship to the capitalist system, not to their colour.

This does not mean that discrimination does not exist for it does have an important effect upon Asians' and West Indians' lives. However, it is essential to stress that while discrimination is an external factor it is a product of another set of factors. So to understand and explain the apparent effects of discrimination it is necessary to examine the material conditions from which it arises. Explanations of the actions of Asians and West Indians which rest on discrimination are of little value for they are treating an effect as a cause and consequently failing to explain the factors which underlie discrimination.

It is unlikely that workers turn to their workmates for aid for members of workers' families are much more important. Workmates'

support only becomes important during a dispute and the aid they receive from workmates is not the same as the aid Asians receive from kin and friends. While many workers do see trade unions and the labour party as the means to secure a better life style Rex and Tomlinson overemphasise white British workers' involvement in these organisations and their power.

The contrast between white British workers using trade unions to further their interests and Asians their community is grossly exaggerated. It is not the case that a political movement, based on trade unions, fights for the rights of workers in housing, education and other welfare services. Instead, the collaboration of trade unions and the Labour party with policies which cut workers' living standards suggests that workers are isolated from a general, political movement which is capable of advancing their interests.

Rex and Tomlinson argue that white British workers exert pressure on Labour councillors for decent housing through their membership of skilled unions. Asians, because they are members of general trade Unions, do not have their housing interests represented to councillors. In reality, unions, skilled or otherwise, do not represent their members' housing interests. Trades Councils may represent the housing interests of all trade unionists in an area to local councillors but individual unions do not do so.

Minimal standards are guaranteed in welfare services through the activity of members of unions not, as Rex and Tomlinson suggest through

trade unions as such. Trade unions have not given a lead to the workers they represent, rather the workers have used the machinery of trade unions to help them further disputes, to maintain services, etc.

Trade unions do not constitute the focus for the life of white British workers for there is usually little contact and unions do not carry out general political work. Many union branches very rarely meet and workers may only become involved with unions during a dispute.³² Unions are not concerned with the general life style of their members but instead with representing complaints and claims to employers.

White British people rely mainly on their families for aid and when appropriate the community or trade unions to advance their interests and this is also the case for Asians. They are members of unions and like white British workers have little contact with them. Nevertheless, they now use unions to pursue political interests and support disputes over wages and conditions. Asians benefit as much from union membership as white British workers for unions are only as strong and active as the members in them.

Rex and Tomlinson's view of the welfare state is not very clear. They argue that workers' activity won them these rights and that this temporarily stabilised the capitalist system and opened up new opportunities for social mobility. In fact, the welfare state had nothing to do with the stability of capitalism since 1945 and it has not opened up new opportunities for workers.³³ In many ways the welfare state was a response to the changing needs of the capitalist system not something

won by workers' activities.

Westergaard and Resler note that

"... there were signs of a mild increase in social mobility over the 1950s; but not such as to make for any marked alteration in the pattern of unequal opportunity of partial inheritance of position from one generation to the next."³⁴.

While there is a good deal of movement much of it stays on one side or other of white and blue collar work.³⁵ It should be noted that contrary to Rex and Tomlinson's belief the cost of the welfare state was not partly met by unequal trade with the rest of the world. The welfare state is certainly not benevolent for although half of the money it spends is on social services workers themselves pay for these.

It is not the case that connections between different areas of class conflict have not been demonstrated to exist. What links all aspects of social life in Britain is that they exist within a capitalist system which is based on divisions into opposed classes. Housing conflict and industrial conflict are instances of generalised class conflict which is always present in all social relations. The private ownership of capital lies at the base of class divisions and these class divisions are present in all areas of social life.

The suggestion that the two aspects of the "imperial social system" have been separated by a "caste-like barrier" is not very useful. International capitalism links the whole world in its framework. The basis of this system is the exploitation of workers by capitalists in all countries. Workers in metropolitan countries do not exploit workers in colonial countries. Colonial capitalists exploit colonial workers and metropolitan capitalists exploit metropolitan workers and through subsidiaries colonial workers.³⁶

Since Asian immigrants mainly filled working class jobs it is important to understand their relation to the working class. There is no basis for Rex and Tomlinson to suggest that the white British working class is uniting with other classes to exploit Asian immigrants or to defend itself from them as a threat. In an effort to make this assertion stand up they are forced to rely on the concept of "underclass" which holds that blacks, because they are less privileged than white workers, form a separate class.

If blacks in Britain did form an "underclass" then they would necessarily have specific relations to the means of production distinct from other classes. Further, they would have relations with other classes and would be in conflict with them. For "class" to have any meaning at all it cannot be judged on the basis of how much money people earn or some other such measure but instead on the basis of the private ownership of capital. Thus, Asian workers in Britain have the same relations to the means of production as white British workers.

Rex and Tomlinson stressed that black workers were less privileged than white British workers and that this was a basis for them being termed an "underclass". However, an obvious flaw in this argument is that black workers are not uniformly concentrated at the bottom. Within the working class there are many divisions and different groups of workers occupy different positions in terms of earning power, ability to corner a section of the market, etc. ~~If~~ regardless of this the common features of their position override the differences between them.

According to Rex and Tomlinson class conflict between the black "underclass" and the white British working class arose because of the former's underprivileged position and their recognition of the need to defend their interests. The position of blacks in Britain, however, is

not due to deliberate oppression by the unity of classes in Britain. Rather, it stems from features of the capitalist system into which they have become integrated. Because blacks fill many of the lower positions this does not mean that classes are uniting to keep them there. To understand their position what must be examined are the processes which create classes and Rex and Tomlinson do not do so.³⁷

Undoubtedly, there are white British workers who believe that blacks should only be given the worst jobs but it cannot be concluded from this that black and white British workers are in conflict over the type of job black workers can take. Class conflict is constantly taking place and in it black and white workers are opposed to capitalists. ~~If~~ regardless of how black and white workers regard each other this is the key area of class conflict.

Disputes have arisen in which black and white workers have seen their interests to be opposed. However, disputes between workers are constantly occurring within the working class because of its size and diversity.³⁸ It cannot be argued therefore that blacks and whites are forming distinct classes to pursue this conflict. The conflict which exists between blacks and whites is not taking the form of class conflict. The activities of racists are not examples of class conflict between a black "underclass" and a white British class and even less so are the activities of black and white workers on picket lines seeking a wage increase. Blacks and whites may have specific and different interests but much more important than these are the interests they have in common with each other as workers. The formation of an "ethnic-class-for-itself" is therefore impossible for it is the relations to the means of production that are the basis of class divisions.

In spite of racism and discrimination black workers are part of the working class. They are in the same labour market and consequently it is possible to begin to explain their actions on that basis. Their general class position determines their life chances and their relations to other groups in Britain. Rex and Tomlinson's failure to correctly identify black workers' class leads them to conclusions which are completely unwarranted and it will be considered later whether this view of class has been adopted to justify the assumptions which they appear to have begun their analysis with.

While the colonial experience may have been a factor in the rise of racism and discrimination many other factors must be taken into consideration. For example, Jewish and Polish immigrants to Britain encountered racism and discrimination but they were not part of the British Empire.³⁹ Of greater importance, is the positions that immigrants fill in the social system. If immigrants find jobs in the lower positions then people will come to see them as only suitable for that type of job.⁴⁰

Once a migrant group has been classified as inferior because of the type of jobs they fill, racist beliefs are used to justify their position. A bad job usually results in bad housing, education, etc and so racist beliefs can appear to be true. An important factor which helped to determine the racism directed against blacks was the decline in the British economy during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

During a recession working-class anger and frustration can be directed against employers and national governments or they can be turned against

one scapegoat or another. Immigrants, at various times, were used as scapegoats for the recession by employers and governments. Hysterical news reports created alarm and fear about blacks as criminals, illegal immigrants, swamping Britain's culture, etc. The level of racism present in Britain at any time is due to the interaction of many factors of which the colonial experience is only one and a declining one at that for today's youths do not hold beliefs about the Empire as strongly (if at all) as their parents.

Recent street battles have been directed against racist and fascist parties and the police. In some of the best known battles whites have been involved alongside blacks. Further, if it was not for provocation by the police and racists street battles would not occur. They were not spontaneous uprisings by a black "underclass" and do not symbolise that they have been stigmatised as an inferior group.

Blacks are prepared to take to the streets to defend themselves if they feel threatened. They do not do so to win the same rights as Englishmen because they have these rights.⁴¹ What they do protest about is racism and discrimination which may infringe these rights but class-like groups have not been formed to pursue conflict between blacks and whites because such conflict occurs at an individual level or between racists and anti-racists. Rex and Tomlinson's assertions about race conflict will be returned to later.

It is not surprising that they do not press the point that Asians do not complain about discrimination. Asians have been extremely vociferous in their complaints and this is because they recognise that their interests lie in Britain. Having taken the decision to settle in Britain

Asians realised that it would not be possible to maintain their cultural and social order as they had done in Asia. Even when it was only single men who came to Britain they recognised that maintaining their cultural and social order would be very difficult.

Asians have not adopted a pariah role in Britain and have accepted discrimination less and less as time has gone on. They are well aware of discrimination which exists in Britain and recognise that they face greater difficulties in trying to move upwards. Their job aspirations are not low and they certainly do not fail to recognise discrimination because of their supposed low aspirations. They recognise the opportunities that are available but also know enough about British society to recognise that working-class children's aspirations are rarely fulfilled.

Asian workers' options in housing are more restricted than those of white British workers. However, it is incorrect to argue that Asian workers are "forced" to buy houses for this does not take into consideration their preferences and desires. Council housing and rented property are often inadequate for Asians' needs. It is not that Rex and Tomlinson are "wrong" but rather that they have left another side of the issue out of the account. A full explanation comes by examining both together.

To fit Asians into an "underclass" theory Rex and Tomlinson suggest that white British workers have a higher standard of living and greater chances of mobility than they actually do. For example, finding houses and jobs for their children is supposedly much easier for whites. There is no evidence for these assertions and in fact the situation is much more likely to be about the same for Asians and white British workers. Given that jobs are difficult to find Asians and British will attempt to find jobs for their

children but neither will be confident about being able to do so.⁴²

Rex and Tomlinson's understanding of Asian migration is fairly limited. They believe the Asians who migrated led a "miserable existence" and were "ambitious". However, the migration at first was largely a move to preserve status. Asians did not see it as inevitable that they would have to live in the "diaspora" and at first intended to return home. That is why the decision to settle was so important for it ran counter to the underlying reason for migration which was to raise the status of the family in Asia and to return there.

In contrast to Rex and Tomlinson it can be concluded that Asians are part of the British working class and that while they face racism and discrimination it is impossible to understand their position without beginning from this perspective. Individual white British workers may be racist but this does not mean that the white British working class is uniting with other classes in opposition to a black "underclass". The strategies used by Asians to avoid conflict infrequently take the form of individual capital accumulation and social mobility because the economic recession has made this extremely difficult.

Minority communities are developing forms of self-help and self-defence but there is no evidence to suggest that

"they will increasingly interpret their experience from a Third World point of view, looking to a change in the balance of power and resources between rich and poor nations as a means to their own liberation."⁴³

There is nothing in Rex and Tomlinson's data to support this assertion. The available evidence suggests that blacks are becoming increasingly involved in the struggles in Britain through their own and British organisations. The

crucial area of struggle is in Britain and for many blacks, especially Asians, events in the Third World have little bearing on their views and attitudes.⁴⁴

By distinguishing between white British workers/unions and black workers/the community they ignore blacks' involvement in and support for unions, strikes and wider political issues. They also ignore community action involving blacks and whites. When Rex and Tomlinson argue that blacks are an "underclass" because they are less privileged than white British workers they fly in the face of their own data.⁴⁵

Conflict between blacks and whites does occur but it is not class conflict. Rex and Tomlinson started from the assumption that race and class conflict exist and have attempted to justify this position throughout their study. The theory of an "underclass" which they adopted has no basis in the empirical data they present but they need to assert its existence to justify their belief that it is class-like groups which engage in conflict.

There is no evidence to suggest that racial conflict is taking place along class lines. In Britain there is an extremely complex situation which depends on a wide variety of factors. It is far too simplistic to conclude that the white British working class is uniting with other classes against a black "underclass" without explaining how this massive piece of class collaboration is happening.

Racial conflict has taken two forms up till now; individual attacks against blacks have occurred inspired by racism and large scale racial

conflict has occurred between racists and black and white anti-racists or between black and whites and the police. There is nothing to suggest racial conflict on the basis of classes here and this puts Rex and Tomlinson's assertions in a very bad light.

They are prepared to see racial conflict in any situation.⁴⁶ Their study of Handsworth represents an attempt to justify their belief that racial conflict is inevitable and is much more important than class conflict. They set out to explain racial conflict in Britain but to do this they distort the current situation in Britain and apply invalid theories to the data they collected.

Rex and Tomlinson's study bears no resemblance to this thesis. Underlying this thesis is dialectical materialism which first of all examines the classes and relations between them in a society. On this basis Asians' position in British society can be established. Their actions and the changes that have occurred amongst them over the last twenty years can then be analysed and explained rather than asserted.

CHAPTER 2

ETHNICITY AND THE STUDY OF ASIANS IN BRITAIN

A number of approaches have been used to analyse Asians in Britain. This chapter is concerned with "idealist approaches"¹ of which those concerned with ethnicity are the most important for they have been widely utilised in various forms to examine migrants in Britain. The work of the Ballards will be examined in detail for they are specifically concerned with Asians in Britain and they have tried to build up a theoretical base for the use of ethnicity.² Roger Ballard contends that anthropological approaches have much to offer in the debate over the utility of ethnicity as a concept for understanding Asians in Britain.³ It is therefore necessary to critically examine the work of those anthropologists on whom he bases this belief. After doing so the work of other anthropologists who have used ethnicity in their studies of Asians will be examined. In advocating the use of ethnicity Roger Ballard dismisses a Marxist approach. His reasons for doing so will be scrutinised and assessed and then conclusions will be drawn about the utility of idealist approaches.

The Ballards argue that

"....external constraints, such as the migrant's position in the labour and housing markets or the discrimination he faces, are ultimately prior to the internal preferences of the group."⁴

They also hold that

"It is the external constraints of discrimination which set the limits within which South Asians and West Indians in Britain may operate."⁵

Elsewhere, they argue that racial discrimination is the most important of the external constraints.⁶

This emphasis on discrimination does not take the analysis very far for there are more important determinants of Asians' life chances.⁷ While they mention these the Ballards do not examine them or their relationships to Asians. Thus, their article deals at length with cultural changes but does not explain why and how these have occurred. They recognise that it is through the dialectical relationship between internal preferences and external constraints that changes in Asians' culture occur but they do not examine external constraints.

Although they have set out a model for the development of South-Asian settlements it concentrates almost exclusively on cultural factors. For example, they rarely refer to the jobs Asians found yet this was crucial in determining a whole number of aspects of Asians' life style in Britain.⁸ They believe that Asians and West Indians form a permanent underclass carrying out jobs white workers are unwilling to do⁹, yet this bears no resemblance to the situation which actually existed.¹⁰ The development of Asian communities is inextricably linked to the development of the social, political and economic environment in Britain yet the Ballards only deal with the latter occasionally and even then do not examine the relationship between it and Asian communities.

Asians did bring cultural values derived from their area of origin to Britain. However, since coming to Britain their culture has been changed in some cases, disappeared in others and remained the same in yet other cases because of the different environment in Britain. Asians would have liked to have maintained their culture intact but external forces have made this impossible. By asserting that Asians have largely changed their culture through their own actions and decisions the Ballards

fail to deal with the role of the external environment in the changes which have occurred.

In one of their studies these problems come out very clearly. They set out a model which described the process of development of Sikh communities but which they argue is applicable in general to most Asian communities. The third phase of it came about when honour (izzat) could be won or lost in Britain. The Ballards argue that Sikhs were becoming involved in social obligations and status competition and that greater sums of money were being spent on making life easier in Britain. As viable ethnic colonies began to emerge the decision to bring over the families was taken.

At no stage do the Ballards mention what the social obligations were or why Sikhs became involved in status competition. The decision to bring over the families of the migrants is not properly explained. Considering that the purpose of migration was to make a lot of money quickly and then to return the Ballards' explanation for the decision makes little sense. What makes this all the more difficult to understand is that the Ballards argue that the Sikhs still regarded themselves as transient at this time. It seems contradictory that they viewed themselves as transients but set down fairly strong roots in Britain.

Further, the Ballards assert that the Sikhs set about recreating as far as possible the institutions of Punjabi society: "The reconstruction of the family, ideally in its joint form, became the over-riding goal."¹¹ They argue that networks became tighter and insulated from the "external British world" and that the Sikhs also began to demonstrate their cultural distinctions in a much more overt manner. Thus, the Sikhs' ethnic organisation is not weakening, their commitment to Punjabi moral

and social values remains intense and the myth of return provides "... the central charter for the maintenance of Sikh ethnicity."¹².

It seems unlikely that the "myth of return" legitimises continued adherence to the values of the Sikhs' homeland. For the large majority of Sikh youths Britain is their homeland. Most male adults have lived in Britain for ten to twenty years and their interests increasingly lie in Britain. Further, the Ballards never mention exactly how close the Sikhs' actual links with their families in the Punjab are or the extent to which remittances are still sent home.

While the Ballards may have correctly described the way in which Sikhs set about consolidating their culture in Britain they do not properly explain how this could occur. They only describe how Sikhs maintained aspects of their culture and there is no mention of the external environment at this time. However, this aspect of the development of Sikh colonies was only possible because of specific conditions in the environment and when these changed it resulted in changes amongst Asians. This failure to appreciate the role of the environment becomes particularly clear when they continue to argue that Asians' culture is responsible for changes when in fact it is the environment.¹³.

When Britain entered a recession this had implications for the economic, social and political climate. Promotion in jobs began to be delayed and virtually stopped for blacks for they tended to be in jobs with low promotion prospects even at the best of times. Demand for goods fell and small shops began to run into difficulties. Thus, the Ballards' claims that Sikhs are moving into better areas, that they are

able to earn more money and that they are setting up their own businesses are unwarranted assertions based on the belief that these are natural developments within the Sikh community ~~ir~~ regardless of factors in the environment.

Many of Roger Ballard's arguments concerning Asian youth may also be unwarranted assertions. He argues that Asian youth are re-adopting the turban "... as a means of re-asserting their pride in their Sikh identity"¹⁴, on the basis of conversations with "several young people" yet other people have found Asian youth less likely to adopt overt symbols.¹⁵ He never explains how ethnic communities "reinforce themselves" and "close their ranks". Statements such as these cause many problems because they are very unclear and conceal more than they explain.

The Ballards argue that the utilisation of cultural values is the basis of ethnicity. Problems arise with their notion of cultural values for the implication is that they remain static - they are "given" and "drawn upon". However, in Asia or Britain cultural values are affected by the environment so they are constantly undergoing definition and redefinition in the process of day-to-day life. They may also become more or less important to the group depending upon the environment in which it exists.

It is regrettable that the Ballards do not explain what "new structures" Asians created to help them respond to living in Britain. New structures may not always be created and may not allow a group to respond effectively to its environment. Amongst Sikhs and other

Asians some cultural values are being dropped, others are being maintained in a modified form or to a large extent in their original form - they are not simply utilised to create "new structures". It is also unlikely that Asians consciously pick out aspects of their cultural values which they think would help them respond to living in Britain.

The utilisation of cultural values does not necessarily result in the creation of "new structures" which help Asians to respond effectively to a new environment. Cultural values can be a hindrance to effectively responding to the environment and it might even be argued that Asians should have dropped some of their cultural values to help them respond most effectively.

Changes in material conditions affect cultural values just as they affect other interests. In the face of such changes "new structures" and interests may be forced upon Asians. Cultural values are constantly undergoing change in response to the material environment for they are not fixed or given. Asians may attempt to adhere to old cultural values but their ability to do so will be limited by the material conditions in which they find themselves. To live in Britain Asians had to modify their cultural values in the face of material conditions. But to explain why specific changes occurred it is necessary to examine the material conditions and not just the empirical features of them.

Roger Ballard argues that: "Far from dying away, ethnicity shows every indication of becoming more significant".¹⁶ Ethnicity is a key concept for him and he argues that anthropological approaches have much to offer in explaining the importance of it. In particular he leans fairly

heavily on the theories developed by Barth and Cohen so these will be examined closely. Epstein's recent contribution to the debate will also be discussed.

The basic concern of Barth's approach is to shift the focus of study from the cultural content of an ethnic group to the boundaries of it and the way that these may be generated and maintained. He argues that ethnic groups have been idealised as separated off from the rest of society and as having a distinct culture which marks them off as a separate category.

Barth faults this view by pointing out that ethnic groups do not develop in isolation and that culture is largely a factor of the environment people find themselves in. He writes:

"It is thus inadequate to regard overt institutional forms as constituting the cultural features which at any time distinguish an ethnic group - these overt forms are determined by ecology as well as by transmitted culture."¹⁷.

Further, he regards the sharing of a common culture as an implication or result of ethnic group organisation.

The alternative that Barth presents is based on the notion that ethnic groups "... are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves, and thus have the characteristic of organising interaction between people."¹⁸. What is of importance then is not people's overt behaviour but their declaration of ethnic group membership. Barth writes:

"The constraints on a person's behaviour which spring from this ethnic identity thus tend to be absolute and, in complex poly-ethnic societies, quite comprehensive; and the component moral and social conventions are made further resistant to change by being joined in stereotyped clusters as characteristics of one single identity."¹⁹.

He argues that ethnic distinctions can emerge after a "... categorisation of population sectors in exclusive and imperative status categories".²⁰ If there are large differences in these statuses then there will be many constraints on inter-ethnic interaction. This idea leads to the "... standardisation of interaction and the emergence of boundaries which maintain and generate ethnic diversity within larger, encompassing social systems".²¹ The boundaries therefore present limits on interaction between groups and since ethnic groups persist this means that boundaries must be clearly defined.

To describe the position that ethnic groups have in society Barth uses an ecological metaphor. Ethnic groups may occupy distinct niches and be in minimal competition for resources, or they may monopolise separate territories and be in competition for resources, or they may occupy reciprocal niches, or two or more groups may be in competition within the same niche.

Because of changes in economic and political circumstances recruitment of members to ethnic groups, unlike boundaries, need not be rigid. When ethnic identities cannot be successfully realised they will be dropped; the measure of success being the performance of others and the available alternatives. Barth writes:

"What matters is how well the others, with whom one interacts and to whom one is compared, manage to perform, and what alternative identities and sets of standards are available to the individual".²²

Barth argues that stratified poly-ethnic systems exist where groups have differential control of assets valued by all groups in the system. He writes:

"The cultures of the component ethnic groups in such systems are thus integrated in a specific way: they share certain general value orientations and scales, on the basis of which they can arrive at judgements of hierarchy".²³

In this situation he believes that special processes are required, for example, state controls, to maintain differential control of assets.

Minority ethnic groups have come about generally "... as a result of external historical events" and Barth argues that "... a pre-established cultural contrast is brought into conjunction with a pre-established social system".²⁴ For minorities interaction takes place within the framework of the dominant, majority group's statuses and institutions.

In a capitalist system ethnic groups may either seek to become incorporated; keep cultural differences to sectors of non-articulation while participating in the larger system in other sectors; or emphasise their ethnicity and try to create new positions not formerly open to them. Tribe, religion, etc may become the primary ethnic identity for a group but how well it lasts depends on the readiness of others to embrace this identity and the environment in which it finds itself.

At the moment ethnic groups seem to be organised on a political level. Barth writes: "Such political movements constitute new ways of making cultural differences organisationally relevant... and new ways of articulating the dichotomised ethnic groups".²⁵ He argues that when ethnicity becomes political the cultural differences between groups are reduced to a few differences so that they can compete on the same level.

He is arguing that boundaries between ethnic units are maintained by a limited set of cultural features. Most cultural matter can vary, be learnt and change without affecting these boundaries. So the history of an ethnic group is not the history of "a culture". He concludes that

"... the elements of the present culture of that ethnic group have not sprung from the particular set that constituted the group's culture at a previous time, whereas the group has a continual organisational existence with boundaries (criteria of membership) that despite modifications have marked off a continuing unit".²⁶.

Problems arise in Barth's account because of his emphasis on the actors' self-identification as members of an ethnic group and his belief that boundary maintenance is more important than overt behaviour. The way that people declare their membership of an ethnic group is through adherence to certain rules and codes of conduct which they express during interaction through overt behaviour. While it is important to look beyond cultural expressions in examining ethnic groups Barth down-grades the importance that an examination of overt expressions may have.

In Sikhism, for example, it is essential to understand the importance attached to the overt display of adherence to it. When immigrants first came to Britain they tended to drop the overt expressions but with the development of a community some re-adopted these symbols. Debate has raged over whether it is possible to be a good Sikh without outwardly displaying so. Youth who have lost interest in Sikhism have dropped all overt expressions of it.

Barth's argument that boundaries emerge from the canalisation and standardisation of interaction and then maintain and generate ethnic diversity is rather dubious. Boundaries are only the expressions of the limits on interaction between actors and are constantly generated, changed and maintained by interaction. They may be weak or strong, few or many, complex or simple therefore ethnic diversity is not maintained by boundaries but by interaction.

The relationship between boundaries and actors, cultural matter and ethnic groups is confused in Barth's account: boundaries mark off and define a group, they are the criteria of membership and are rigid; the membership is always changing as is the cultural matter of a group; the group's membership and culture may change but it will have a continual organisational existence with boundaries. It is difficult to see how boundaries can be rigid in these circumstances for they are created and maintained by interaction.

Ethnic groups persist because actors hold roughly the same ideas on something or about who they are so their point of focus is the culture of the group even though this may change. Thus, ethnic groups may persist but they can only do so in changed forms. Boundaries are created by interaction so they are subject to the fluctuations due to changes in the group's culture and changes in membership. They are not the criteria of membership then nor do they mark off or define a group.

Since ethnic groups and culture constantly fluctuate grave doubt can be cast on Barth's argument that ethnic identity places comprehensive and absolute constraints on behaviour. A person's ethnic identity is not a fixed set of rules governing action in every situation. Instead, people interact and in doing so they may emphasise, mention or drop their ethnic identity. It may be irrelevant to the interaction or it may be the focus of it. Actors consciously manipulate ethnicity - they do not behave in a certain manner because of the constraints of their ethnic identity.

On Barth's own admission ethnic groups are based on a few cultural factors and this is a general feature of ethnic groups; they can usually only organise their members on a few basic principles. This is true of the majority of ethnic groups and only a few could fit Barth's description.²⁷ It seems absurd to suggest that ethnicity could have comprehensive constraints because the members are involved in a multitude of different interactions. The system of constraints needed to do this would need to be enormous and it seems unlikely the members could possibly act in line with it.

It is also possible to question the ecological metaphor employed by Barth: The assumption that ethnic groups occupy distinct niches may be true for some but it is not true for all. The whole ecological metaphor is open to criticism on the grounds that people make choices and can change their environment. This is not the same as ecological adaption where everything is balanced and in its niche for people of one ethnic group can move into niches of other ethnic groups.

Further, the typology for the interdependence of ethnic groups that Barth suggests would create more problems than it could possibly solve. Reducing the interaction of ethnic groups within the larger society to four neat categories is going too far. To do so leaves out such factors as class and economic and political conditions. He is ignoring the external material conditions which not only compose the universe within which ethnic groups exist but which affect them. And these effects must be taken into consideration in any study concerned with ethnic groups.

Barth's argument that in stratified polyethnic systems different groups can arrive at judgements of hierarchy seems unlikely for groups do not act in this way. Instead, group(s) are dominated by another group(s). The situation is that group(s) force other group(s) into a subordinate position while the subordinate group(s) oppose this position and try to change it. No examples spring to mind of groups which have arrived at judgements of hierarchy which place themselves at the bottom. And even although Barth is aware that special processes are required to maintain differential control of assets he does not even tackle the problem of how one group gains a monopoly over these processes.

A minor problem arises in Barth's belief that interaction takes place within the framework of the dominant, majority group's statuses and institutions. Here Barth fails to examine why one group is dominant and how it maintains this position. Ethnicity can cross classes while leaving a small ruling class in power. The dominant group is not necessarily the majority group. An obvious case in point is Zimbabwe where the whites were the ruling class and also a dominant, minority, ethnic group.

The problem of identity is never tackled in its full sense by Barth. He only examines the actors' self-identification yet an ethnic group is identified in a specific way by others. Although he seems to deal with this problem because he is concerned with interaction his approach does not deal sufficiently with how one group of people may have their ethnicity defined for them.

What counts in an interaction is not just the actors' own beliefs in their ethnicity but also what others think the actors' ethnicity is, and the strength of their beliefs. There are a host of beliefs about an ethnic group which are held by the majority and within the group there are strong to weak beliefs in the identity of the group. Something other than boundary maintenance must be discussed if sense is to be made of the relationship between an ethnic group and the wider society.

Apart from these problems Barth at no point examines the relationship between ethnicity and class. Ethnic groups do not exist in a vacuum or a balanced environment. Instead they exist in class societies and so class must be taken into consideration. While Barth recognises the existence of the environment he never discusses the importance of material factors yet these determine the conditions in which an ethnic group exists. By failing to systematically deal with the external environment Barth has to rely on notions such as boundaries to explain the actions of ethnic groups. On his account ethnic groups are isolated and self-perpetuating whereas in fact they are undergoing constant pressures from material factors.

Cohen's notion of ethnicity has its base in political action.

He defines an ethnic group as

"...a collectivity of people who (a) share some patterns of normative behaviour and (b) form a part of a larger population, interacting with people from other collectivities within the framework of a social system"

and uses the term ethnicity to refer to "...the degree of conformity by members of the collectivity to these shared norms in the course of social interaction".²⁸ Thus: "Ethnicity is essentially a form of interaction between culture groups operating within common social contexts."²⁹.

He goes on to point out that individuals can manipulate the customs of a group but they must also participate in the group's activities and adhere to its aims. Cohen views ethnicity as dynamic and subject to socialisation and changing socio-cultural conditions. He then points to the link between ethnicity and interest groups.

Formal interest groups have a clearly defined authority structure, communication network and decision-making procedure. They are rationally organised on bureaucratic lines and their aims are clearly specified. Informal groups will use any cultural mechanisms to articulate the organisations of their grouping, for example, kinship, ritual and other symbolic activities. This is wasteful in time and resources because, for example at a meeting, the group are concerned with the ceremonial and only discuss informally and unsystematically present problems. He believes the groups only organise themselves informally if they are forced to do so, for example, by state opposition.

In most groups Cohen discerns formal and informal (contract aspect and moral aspect). But it is in informal groups that political ethnicity comes into being. He argues that ethnicity is used "...in articulating the organisational functions of interest groups that for one reason or another cannot organise themselves formally"³⁰, for example, resistance movements. He concludes that ethnic groups utilise an organisation that is both formal and informal "... in order to compete within the wider social system!"³¹.

Cohen's discussion of interest groups is open to question. The view that ethnicity is used as the organising principle of informal groups is too limited. Groups can organise themselves informally, i.e. on the basis of culture, without being in opposition to the state. Some informal groups are only concerned with the religious, customary and ceremonial activities. Thus, some ethnic groups are concerned only with their shared identity and not with utilising it for some other end.

And even if Cohen's formulation of informal interest groups were to be accepted there are problems with it. The IRA is an interest group which is opposed by the state yet it is organised formally. Further, many groups who are opposed by the state do not organise themselves around an ethnic identity. What must be recognised is that ethnicity may form the basis of political groups or groups may see it as an end in itself.

There are many bases for organisation and ethnicity is one but how it actually "fits in" in any society is a matter for close analysis not for crude oversimplification. Ethnic groups are rarely so homogenous that they can pursue many interests. Instead they cut across other ties so creating strong and weak bonds of identity. While Cohen appears to recognise this he fails to follow through the implication of it and so his account remains very limited in its scope.

Like Barth, Cohen does not tackle the problem of how external factors can determine changes within groups. Nor does he come to grips with the concept of class which is fundamental to the understanding of all industrialised societies. External factors must be taken into account for people are not always allowed to take their own decisions. Further, they often have material interests which have to be fulfilled and which may run counter to an ethnic interest.

Britain is a capitalist society divided into opposed classes. It is not composed of ethnic groups in competition with one another. Cohen never discusses how ethnicity fits in with class conflict in this context. He is only concerned with the internal workings of ethnic groups and looks to this to explain why they act in a certain manner. Such an approach leaves out the effects which external factors have on such action. Bearing these problems in mind Cohen's formulation of ethnicity is good in the respect that it recognises conscious subjects manipulating the available material to their best advantage.

Epstein is also critical of Cohen but for different reasons than those made above. He believes that because of the powerful emotional charge connected with ethnic behaviour the concept of identity must be placed at the heart of the analysis. Ethnicity represents varying expressions of ethnic identity and the latter is a matter of perception. Epstein appears to modify this psychological approach by arguing that perception is "...shaped and coloured by its social environment".³².

Even though the members of ethnic groups have different interests (for example, class) ethnic affiliation takes precedence according to Epstein. In fact, the group can persist even though its interests may change. He believes that ethnic behaviour is not governed by rational calculation. He writes that this can only be upheld by ignoring the fact that ethnic behaviour "...is the expression of a degree of affect all the more powerful because it is rooted in the unconscious".³³. For Epstein, it is a mistake to view ethnicity as essentially a political phenomenon for this is to confuse an aspect of the phenomenon with the phenomenon itself.

In his view ethnic identity can be seen as lying on a continuum marked by: a positive pole - inner resources and inner concepts of exclusiveness; and a negative pole - imposed from without. Thus, positive identity is built on self-esteem while negative identity is built on the internalised evaluation of others: "...ethnic identity... is the product of the interplay of internal and external factors".³⁴.

Epstein concludes that to achieve an understanding of the problems that ethnicity poses an approach has to take account of

"...the interplay of the external and the internal, the objective and the subjective, and the sociological and the psychological elements which are always present in the formation of ethnic identity."³⁵.

It is possible to attack Epstein's use of psychological arguments for although he remarks on the importance of childhood experience and the interplay between external and internal he emphasises the latter because of the supposedly powerful emotional charge connected with ethnic behaviour.

However, there is not such a charge connected with all ethnic behaviour. Members may feel more or less strongly about their ethnic identity but it does not necessarily have a connection with psychological factors. Further, it is not enough to remark that childhood experience is important for the socialisation process is vital in the development of an ethnic identity and this process is externally imposed. And the question of perception is left in the air; what is perception? Do certain people perceive the world differently and if so, why? Is it hereditary? Epstein does not allow for external events in this case or in others.

Although he claims to allow for external social events he persistently fails to take proper account of them. For example, he argues that ethnic affiliation can take precedence over other interests but he fails to explain why this should happen or under what circumstances. The only explanation he offers is that there are powerful emotional charges. Or again, when he argues that the group can persist even though its interests may change he does not explain whether the membership of the group has changed or the interests of the group have changed. If so, -why? how?

Epstein systematically fails to come to grips with the external events and forces and instead relies on explanations which are "rooted in the unconscious".³⁶ Even when he suggests a continuum the same problem emerges: one pole is rooted in the psychological and the other in the sociological, i.e. one in the internal and inexplicable and the other in the external and explicable. The examples he provides are open to these criticisms.

He noted that American Jews have lower delinquency rates than other ethnic groups. This may be true but it requires explanation. The implicit assumption is that part of the Jewish identity is non-delinquency. More realistically it can be noted that middle-class Jewish people, in common with other middle-class children do not need to throw stones through windows for amusement whereas working-class Jewish children, like other working-class children, often do. This failure to examine the social environment is very damaging for Epstein's account.

Epstein's conclusion highlights the poverty of this model for examining ethnicity: it is surely essential for all approaches to examine all possible determinants of ethnic identity. Apart from some very dubious notions about powerful emotional charges there is nothing in this approach to warrant further attention being paid to it.

Much of the material on Asians in Britain owes a debt to the theories of ethnicity developed by Barth and Cohen but very few utilise these theories in a clear manner. Along with the Ballards there are a few other people who apply ethnicity to Asians in Britain. Some of their work will now be discussed and after this Ballard's criticism of a Marxist approach will be examined.

Brooks and Singh have utilised many recent developments in anthropological theory in their discussion of Asians working in foundries in the West Midlands.³⁷ There are two main themes in their paper: the interaction of economic conditions and racial discrimination; the ethnic response to material conditions. On the first of these Brooks and Singh describe a situation of labour shortages being remedied by the recruitment of Asians but with the Asians being restricted in their opportunities at work. On the other they describe a pivotal system involving "brokers", "networks" and "quasi-groups" which is mainly attributed to Asians' ethnicity.

In small foundries such as Brooks and Singh describe it is not surprising that workers should be recruited through friends. If it becomes known that factory X pays better wages than other local factories and that it has vacancies a worker in another factory might ask someone who works in factory X to ask about employment for him. This is a common practice but what appears to make it different in the Asians' case is that one individual is responsible for the recruitment of many workers.

While Brooks and Singh recognise that this situation is a response to constraints placed by the labour market they attempt to make Asians a special case by introducing ethnicity. Recruitment through friends is used by Asians to minimise job-hunting time and to minimise the possibilities of rejection even though they are not more likely than any other workers to find jobs this way.³⁸ This is a typical feature of the labour market in that type of industry which is small and localised, has personal relationships between employees and employers and a highly differentiated pay structure.

It is not at all surprising that Asians should be recruited in this way or even that an individual should be a focus for recruitment. In a foundry a worker who is close to the foreman and who has worked for a few years in the place can become an unofficial link between the workers and the foreman especially if the foundry is not unionised. Finding someone a job is not derived from ethnic identity for it is something that all workers in this situation might do. However, only some can do it successfully because of their position within the foundry.

Serious doubt must be cast on Brooks and Singh's argument that Asians are in a special relation to the foreman because of their ethnic identity. For example, they argue that Asians "...treat the foreman with a respectful deference he has seldom, if ever, met before. He is treated much like a District Officer in the heyday of colonialism" and that "This is a far more congenial relationship than he enjoys with his often troublesome white workers." 39.

In other factories Asians have proved less deferential than white workers and much more troublesome.⁴⁰ It is not possible to decide how Asians will act in a specific factory from their value system. The reasons for this group of Asians behaving in this way requires a deeper analysis than simply relating it to their value system. What also requires analysis is how white workers act towards the foreman and Asian workers. It also needs to be asked why Asians find it necessary to offer gifts to the foreman and whether this is related to the foundry being non-unionised.

Brooks and Singh argue that

"...pivotal systems are in part an Asian ethnic response to the circumstances of British industry"

and that

"The ties and obligations which give rise to the broker's pivotal role are derived from the traditional non-industrial community and have meaning outside the industrial context".⁴¹

Pivotal systems are not specifically Asian for it is the structure of a particular work situation which allows them to arise.

While ties and obligations are important to the "broker" and do have meaning outside of work they are not derived solely from "traditional, non-industrial" communities. Ties and obligations due to family and friends extend beyond every workplace ~~if~~ regardless of who is involved. In some workplaces due to size, the existence of a union or the personnel manager it will be impossible for such things to occur. In situations where it can occur everyone will use the opportunities available to them.

Although Brooks and Singh thought they were drawing attention to Asians utilising their ethnicity in response to a labour market situation they actually brought to light a structural feature of some areas of British industry. The important point here is not that Asians find jobs through relatives or friends but that workers in areas with small, non-unionised workplaces are likely to use friends or relatives to find out about jobs and to gain employment. Asians, like other workers, are simply taking advantage of a structural feature of British industry.

Important questions that Brooks and Singh do not go on to discuss are why Asians are concentrated in areas with small workplaces, why there is no union, what white workers do in this situation and why this structure persists.

By failing to do this Asians are seen as a special case, with special values and whose actions are determined by their ethnicity. Ethnicity is important but Brooks and Singh have failed to locate it in the structure of the foundry.

A more useful discussion of the relationship between ethnicity and material factors is contained in Saifullah Khan's article on South-Asian women.⁴² She discusses how women use networks of friends to find out about possible sources of employment. The material environment is clearly recognised as exercising constraints mediated by the cultural values of the group of friends or settlement. She writes: "External factors in the environment are thus initial determinants of so-called "ethnic" patterns."⁴³

Ethnic boundaries are viewed as shifting, depending on the setting and circumstances. Thus, she points out how inter-ethnic relationships have developed in south London due to external factors and the context within which interaction took place. However, Saifullah Khan's discussion of the decision to take a job raises problems for she argues that this depends on moral values as much as economic considerations. While this is correct it does not go far enough for moral values are not "given-for-all-time" but are also influenced by material factors.

While Saifullah Khan recognises that decisions are taken along economic and moral lines she does not discuss the interaction between class and ethnicity. Decisions are not made on purely economic grounds for they also

involve class considerations. Whole numbers of possibilities are closed to Asians, not because they are Asians, but because of their position in the class structure. External factors affect people differently for their effects are mediated through the class structure. Underlying any decision then is the Asians' position in the class structure.

These articles by Brooks and Singh and Saifullah Khan deal with ethnicity and work and Wallman has attempted to establish a framework within which ethnicity and work interact. She believes that "... not all work is organised in the same way, for the same reason, or by using the same resources".⁴⁴. Apart from physical differences between different types of work (for example, use of different tools to make different products) and voluntary work, all workers are employed by capitalists who own and run factories and offices and who pay workers wages for their labour so as to extract profit from the workers' labour.⁴⁵.

Further, she argues that: "Systems of work may be created or maintained by ethnicity; ethnicity may be a product of the structure of work."⁴⁶. Again the basis of work in a capitalist society is the relationship between wage-labour and capitalist. Ethnicity does not determine the work situation nor can it be a product of the situation. Interaction takes place at work but not in a manner which in any way affects the underlying principles of it.

What is missing from her account is a discussion of class for it is in the workplace that class divisions manifest themselves. An ethnic group which is clustered in one type of job does not mean it is exploiting a niche. Class inequality and class structure must be examined for they provide the framework within which groups act and ethnic groups are not an exception.

In any situation interaction is not just between two ethnic groups for it takes place against a background dominated by capitalist principles.

In a work situation ethnicity can affect interaction between people and so it does require study. However, Wallman's discussion of work and ethnicity fails to come to grips with any of the problems associated with this interaction. Her argument that "... historical placing seems to be crucial: to be ready, and willing and appropriate at the right moment is the start of a successful ethnic work niche",⁴⁷ avoids the question of the relationship between class and ethnicity which lies at the base of this whole problem.

It is not enough to argue that ethnicity works in the right place at the right time because it is seen to work. Apart from being a circular argument it does not deal with what happens to ethnicity when it does not work nor does it deal with the relationship between ethnicity and the social structures which exist in a workplace. For ethnicity to be useful it is essential to recognise that it is affected by external factors.

In his approach to Pakistanis and housing Dahya adopts a different use of ethnicity. He believes that the immigrant Pakistani population

"...consists of small interlocking and interdependent groups whose members are bound to one another by virtue of their shared past, their experiences and interests in Britain and their orientation to the country of origin."⁴⁸

For Dahya, Pakistani ethnicity lies at the base of the activities of all Pakistanis. It is so strong that it determines their goals and why and how they achieve them.

While also taking into account external constraints Dahya argues that the situation of Pakistanis has to be looked at from the actors' frame of reference. He argues that patterns of settlement "...reflects the immigrants' preferences along ethnic lines."⁴⁹ Later, the growth of services to the Pakistani community helped to keep "... the immigrant community a relatively closed one as the immigrants do not have to cross the ethnic boundaries to satisfy most of their everyday needs."⁵⁰ Using these services, according to Dahya, is not simply "doing the shopping" but also a means of asserting their ethnic origin.

To illustrate his argument Dahya looks at the question of Pakistanis' houses. He attacks authors who have written on this question for failing to look at it in terms of what Pakistanis think and instead assuming that immigrants and themselves share a similar viewpoint. For example, Rex and Moore argued that Pakistanis could not get council houses or mortgages and that various structural constraints exercised by the host society determined the areas they lived in.

Against this Dahya argues that Pakistanis' attitudes on land-holding, living in Britain, why they are here, and over-crowding must be examined. He argues that "...their traditional bias for land ownership is the basis of their predilection for real estate in Britain."⁵¹ Pakistanis bought houses as an investment to raise their income and status. The preference for cheap housing was related to their reason for coming to Britain - as short a stay to earn as much as possible.

Further, "...what we would call overcrowding is a permanent phenomenon and forms part of the villagers' experience."⁵² No matter how dilapidated, the immigrant's house in Britain is infinitely superior to the one in Pakistan and ownership of one is a sign of economic achievement. So, for Dahya, Pakistani ethnicity determined their choice of housing - not racial discrimination though it existed.

Dahya's thesis is that ethnicity determined Pakistanis' goals and how these were best achieved, and it is drawn from their home in Pakistan. Against this it can be argued that external factors determined many of their actions and that while an understanding of their ethnicity is important, it too is affected by external factors.

Dahya's assertion that Pakistanis bought houses for ethnic reasons is only partially correct. The decision to buy a house was made on economic grounds. That it would offer prestige to the buyer was a secondary consideration for, as Dahya points out, Pakistanis were only concerned to earn as much money as possible in a short time and the latter is an economic decision not an ethnic one.

In Dahya's article the implicit assumption seems to be that economic reasons for Pakistanis' actions can be subsumed under ethnicity. This is unsatisfactory because the reasons that Pakistanis came to Britain, worked long hours and saved money were due to economic, not ethnic, considerations. If it were to be accepted that economics could be subsumed in the way Dahya does then all Pakistanis' actions could be attributed to ethnicity without ever explaining what ethnicity is or why it is so powerful.

Other problems can be raised with Dahya's discussion of housing. He attacks Rex and Moore when they argue that Pakistanis could not get council houses or mortgages. He argues that Pakistanis never applied for council houses. However, most councils require people to have lived in an area for a number of years before they are eligible and even then they are likely to be offered poor houses after waiting longest. Further, research has pointed to the lack of knowledge Asians had of council housing facilities and has also pointed to the difficulties Asians face getting a mortgage for anything else than poor quality houses - especially at the time Dahya is referring to.⁵³

While it cannot be denied that Pakistanis wanted cheap housing external constraints ensured that this was all they could get. Low wages meant that after sending home remittances they could not afford expensive houses and the houses they could afford were of low standard in areas whites had moved out of. Thus, external constraints were largely responsible for Pakistani migrant workers living as cheaply as possible.

Developments since then also illustrate that Pakistanis did not have a free choice of housing. Having decided to live in Britain they now face many problems in trying to move into better houses or council housing. External constraints have always been there; the difference at first was that what they desired and what existed happened to be one and the same. It is questionable whether Pakistanis ever found their houses in Britain "infinitely superior" to those in Pakistan. They may have thought so at first but they would inevitably realise that they occupied the worst houses. This realisation will be even more important today for Pakistanis and their children.

Dahya argues that the interests of Pakistani immigrants and the native proletariat are different yet all workers have the same basic interests because of their relations to the means of production. He believes that the myth of return makes Pakistanis see themselves as transients not settlers even though he is writing in 1974 when it had become obvious that this was not the case.⁵⁴

Patterns of settlement cannot reflect the preferences of immigrants "along ethnic lines" because Pakistanis had to move to certain areas to find jobs, they had to work in specific factories and their choice of housing was restricted. Further, Pakistani immigrants have to cross ethnic boundaries every day to satisfy their most basic need - work. And in the work situation they become involved with the structures of the work-place, most notably trade unions.

Dahya's belief that Pakistanis' ethnicity has a determining influence upon their actions leads him to ignore external constraints. Economic considerations brought Pakistanis to Britain, made them take jobs which offered overtime and made them choose the cheapest possible ways of living. Their ethnicity affected these processes so that their reactions were different from white British workers. However, external constraints exist independent of the will of Pakistanis and other workers and must be analysed and explained first. Like everyone else Asians are active subjects and do influence their environment but their activity is limited by external constraints.

All the studies which have been examined here have implicitly rejected a Marxist approach. Roger Ballard recently did so explicitly so attention will now be turned to his criticisms. He asserts that the crucial issue for a

Marxist approach is:

"If it is asserted that economic constraints are ultimately decisive, then the fundamental form of social aggregation should be class, defined as a body of people who share a common relationship to the means of production. But of course ethnic groups frequently do not coincide with class groups; they often divide them, so that, as in Ulster, sections of the working class bitterly oppose one another."⁵⁵.

He continues by arguing that the notion of "false consciousness" offers a "psychologistic" explanation and that is is "unhelpful and unsatisfactory". For Ballard ethnicity is "... a political phenomenon, in which material interest unites with moral and emotional bonds."⁵⁶. Thus, the Marxist approach with its emphasis on the economic and its psychologistic notions does not satisfactorily explain ethnic divisions and conflicts nor the basis of such groups.

Ballard distinguishes between categories and groups: the former is a collection of people who, although identifiable as such, are unaware of their common interests; a group, however, is a collection of people who are conscious of their common position and who take action to change their situation. On this basis he argues that:

"While shared material interest may provide the driving force behind the association, social groups can only be based on shared values, or in other words on some kind of cultural commonality."⁵⁷.

The extent to which Ballard relies on anthropological theories comes out clearly in his discussion of the cultural traits on which a group "draws its strength". Cultural traits are used as the obligations that members of a group have to each other; they demarcate members and non-members; and they are the means by which members exploit their environment and advance their economic and political interests.

In all ethnic groups there is a union of material interests and cultural bonds. It has "clear-cut" boundaries which ensures internal cohesion and creates a category of non-members. In Britain, Asians have come under pressure from white society in the form of racist abuse and discrimination. Ballard believes that in the face of this hostility Asians have begun to "close their ranks" and to reassert their ethnic identity.

Doubt can be cast on Ballards' assertion that ethnicity appears to be becoming more significant. To whom and in what ways are questions that Ballard does not provide answers to. More fundamental reasons can often be found for what appears as an upsurge of ethnicity. For example, class struggles have often appeared as nationalist or religious movements. So what appear as ethnic groups need not necessarily be so. Perhaps this may be demonstrated by looking at the case of Ulster which Ballard cites.

The main problem with Ballard's account is that he completely ignores the history of Northern Ireland and the role of the Britain army in recent years. Protestants have been better off in general compared to Catholics for many years and have been brought up to believe that they are superior. However, it was the discriminatory policies of the state (Catholics did not even have the same civil rights as Protestants) which perpetuated this belief. Both saw their positions as the result of the policies of the state.

When Catholics began to organise themselves against the discrimination they faced, trouble flared for this threatened the status quo. British troops were sent in to ensure the continued discrimination upon which Northern Ireland is based. Catholics are therefore opposed to the British state and its troops. This is not to say that some Catholics might hate Protestants for supporting British troops or that some Protestants do not hate Catholics for fighting back but this does not mean that sections of the working class bitterly oppose one another.

It is not ethnicity which divides the workers for this is only an expression of the different material interests they have in the system as it stands now and this can only persist because the British army is maintaining a status quo which ensures the privileges of Protestants. At the moment there are divisions amongst workers but ultimately their aims are the same. None of this allows Ballard the right to make such unwarranted assertions about Northern Ireland.

Problems also arise in Ballard's formulation of ethnicity as a political phenomenon for, although it can be, it is not necessarily so. Many ethnic groups persist only as cultural groups with no other goal; they do not compete for scarce resources, exploit their environment or pursue economic and political interests. Under different circumstances they might do one or all of these things but an ethnic group does not necessarily have to do them.

While Ballard attacks the Marxist approach for using psychologicistic arguments he uses such arguments himself. Material interests can be defined, examined and measured but the same cannot be said for moral and emotional bonds for these are internal to each individual actor and cannot be examined or measured. To suggest that moral and emotional bonds are of crucial importance is very dangerous for it is very difficult to demonstrate that they exist or that they can exert any influence on the actor.

Ballard argues that shared material interests cannot be the basis of social groups but can provide the driving force behind them. That cultural can be the only basis of groups is an assertion which Ballard does not substantiate and it seems perfectly reasonable that shared material interests can be the basis of social groups. It could be argued that if material interests are the driving force then they must be maintaining the group and do therefore form the basis of it. Further, groups can be formed on the basis of their material interests and do not necessarily have a moral and emotional component., Material interests and values need not be linked in the way he suggests and to accept his approach is to accept the cultural at the expense of the material.

It seems unnecessary for a group (conscious of a common position and taking action to change it) based on shared values and driven by shared material interests to require boundaries to ensure internal cohesion and to mark off members from non-members. Further, if cultural items are dynamic then so must be values and consequently so must boundaries. But culture cannot be dynamic and at the same time provide the basis for "groups" with "clear-cut boundaries".

As a general picture of the Asian population Ballard's assertion that they are closing ranks and reasserting their ethnic identity in the face of hostility is extremely misleading. Asians are certainly beginning to fight back, for example against racism, because they are realising that as Asians or blacks they have to take united action. But this does not necessarily mean that they are reasserting their ethnic identity for they have become involved in struggles within the wider society through trade unions, anti-racist organisations and political parties.⁵⁸

Underlying Ballard's attack on a Marxist approach is a basic misunderstanding of it. The relationship between the material infrastructure and the ideological superstructure has little to do with the crude characterisation provided by Ballard. In his account the former is reduced to economic constraints and the latter to false consciousness which he regards as a psychologistic explanation. A Marxist approach identifies people's interests by their relations to the means of production but recognises that through the dialectical relationship between material and ideological these interests may not be recognised.

Irregardless of whether this is due to "false consciousness" it is the case that every society has a dominant ideology which is largely accepted by everyone even though it is in the interests of only a minority of the population. This is not a psychologistic explanation for it rests on social phenomena (ideas are, after all, only expressions of the existing material relations) and how these are generated and maintained.

While a Marxist approach can accept that cultural factors may over-ride material ones at certain times Ballard cannot accept that material

factors can over-ride cultural ones. By emphasising cultural factors at the expense of material ones Ballard fails to deal properly with a materialist approach.

He cannot disprove the notion that ultimately material interests do provide the basis for classes. He asserts that ethnic groups often divide them and Marxists would agree that divisions exist within the working class. But this does not mean that there is no basis for the existence of united working class. By taking the position that ethnicity is becoming more significant and consequently that it will continue to divide classes Ballard fails to deal with external factors which are responsible for the persistence of class divisions.

This failure is common to all idealist theories. It restricts their analyses to immediately observable factors which are then held up as reasons and causes. In the next chapter it will be demonstrated that material factors and the dialectical relationship between these and ideology are of crucial importance. Idealists' failure to grasp this relationship results in their analyses remaining only at an empirical level and consequently they make unjustifiable assertions which are not based on a full examination of the social action that is taking place.

CHAPTER 3

A Marxist Approach to the Study of Asians in Britain

INTRODUCTION

A Marxist position holds that to understand any specific piece of action or the position and activities of a group it is necessary to examine it historically and to place it in its context. Thus, the analysis of Asians in Britain must take into account the general history of migration to Britain and that of Asians in particular. It is also necessary to gain an understanding of Britain's recent economic, social and political environment. Asians' position in the class structure, their cultural background and the types of interaction between them and white British workers can then be examined.

Before this analysis can take place it is necessary to set out fully the theoretical base on which it rests. If the underlying theory was not fully discussed it could be argued that a Marxist analysis, like idealist ones, was picking on one specific area of Asian life and using it to justify its assertions. It must therefore be demonstrated that a Marxist analysis offers the best explanation of Asians' positions and actions in Britain.

The first step in this analysis is to demonstrate that Britain is a capitalist country with a specific class structure which in large part determines individuals' life chances. Notions such as class consciousness, ideology or worker will be discussed for these are important concepts which underlie a Marxist analysis. Most importantly, the relationship between the base (production) and the superstructure (ideology) will be explored for it is this relationship which is the key to understanding the positions and activities of Asians. It is therefore necessary to make Marxist theory explicit in this chapter so that it can be implicit during the analysis of Asians in Britain in later chapters.

Idealist approaches only offered partial explanation of Asians' actions because they failed to fully appreciate the material environment in Britain. The difference between this and a Marxist approach is that the latter holds that the material environment has a fundamental influence on people's lives. It is therefore essential to demonstrate the importance of this view and the implications it holds for the analysis of Asians in Britain.

Capitalism and Class in Britain

Marx and Engels argued that "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles"¹ and that "The modern bourgeois society ... has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones"². In line with this general position this thesis takes the view that: Britain is a capitalist society and that there are marked inequalities between three main classes; capitalism has persisted even though class conflict exists which ultimately can destroy it; because inequalities in all spheres occur in a definite and predictable way class position generally has a determining influence upon people's life chances.

The features which characterise capitalism are private ownership of the means of production, the drive towards profit maximisation and the existence of markets. Capitalism is a distinct mode of production and it therefore has a specific means of production and reproduction and specific relations of production. Capitalist production of commodities is based in factories utilising the labour of the industrial proletariat. At a very general level people are related to the means of production either as owners or controllers of the means of production (capitalists) or as those who own nothing and have to sell their labour power (working class).

At this level Britain is clearly a capitalist country if both the characteristics of capitalism and the specific relations of production are demonstrated to exist. It has been argued that because of the embourgeoisement of the working class, greater social mobility, the growth of the welfare state, the lack of class conflict, the division between ownership and control of industry and a general egalitarian trend, Britain, along with other Western capitalist countries, has become a "post-capitalist" society. Thus, the argument runs that the major differences between capitalists and the working class are rapidly disappearing and class conflict is being replaced by status competition and easier access to positions of wealth and power.

So although society is industrial it is no longer capitalist because of changes in the class structure. Clearly, if the classes which are generated by capitalism can be shown not to exist then an alternative method of analysis concerned with status, sex, age, etc would be necessary. Instead it will be argued that the social classes which capitalism generates do exist and therefore analysis of any group in Britain must start from this perspective.

For capitalism to exist there must be a capitalist class which through its ownership of the means of production dominates all other sections of society, materially and ideologically. Although the state plays an important role in the economic life of Britain private property is still the main motor of economic activity³, and this wealth, and therefore power, is concentrated within a very small section of society. The proof of that power is that capitalists and managers take all the important decisions and that there is an everyday acceptance of private property and market mechanisms.⁴

Vast inequalities of wealth and power exist in Britain and through looking at these it is possible to demonstrate the existence of classes and the dominant role that capitalists exercise upon all spheres of society. Through their ownership of private capital the richest 1% of Britain's population receive roughly the same share of total value of all personal income as the poorest 30%. Westergaard and Resler argue that: "Possession of property-of capital in the means of production in particular - remains the crucial source of wealth, and the most potent cause of inequality of income"⁵.

Out of all income units (married couples and singles) 10% shared two-thirds of the total income from investment: 1% well over one-third; 85% none at all.⁶ Shareholding is extremely concentrated: 1% own 80% of all capital of this kind giving them enormous power. 93% do not hold anything at all.⁷ Thus, "... ownership of capital in private enterprise remained as intensely concentrated among a tiny minority in 1970 as it had been fifteen or twenty years earlier"⁸. About one-half of 1% of Britain's population disposed of nearly 70% of all corporate capital in personal hands. Company stock which is held by other companies and institutions made up some 50% of the total value of ordinary shareholdings in 1970 and this is controlled by a very small group of director/owners.⁹

There can be no doubt that there is a capitalist class in Britain or that Britain is a capitalist country. This is so because the concentration of high incomes in a few hands arises mainly because of the even sharper concentrations of private property and because

"... the principles which govern allocation and use of most resources reflect the dominance of private capital. The routine assumptions that set the principal parameters of life and policy are capitalist."¹⁰.

This class exists in distinct relationships to other classes. A feature of capitalism is the exploitative nature of its relationship to other classes (especially the working class) and this has changed little for many years. Westergaard and Resler believe that class inequality has not shifted substantially or continuously. Inheritance plays a major part in the maintenance of property concentration and one of the reasons for a shift in the share of wealth amongst the top 10% is due to the rich distributing their wealth before death to avoid death-taxes.

Though material conditions have improved more or less regularly manual workers and many low-grade white-collar workers are governed by the need to sell their labour. Their life-cycle follows a curve fairly close to a flat line.¹¹ This contrasts with the middle-range salariat (run-of-the-mill executives and officials, lower and auxiliary professions) with their upward, incremental and promotional life-cycle and even more sharply with those at the top who largely control the dominant institutions of economy and society or are among the secure and established professions.¹² As old wants have been met many old class differences and aspirations have been eroded but new demands rise and the gap between workers' achievements and aspirations is widening because inequalities of income and wealth still persist only at new levels.

Inequality of condition generally sets marked limits to individual opportunities. Although opportunities for mobility are higher for white-collar workers their mobility is very modest. While there is a good deal of movement much of it stays on one side or the other of white and blue-collar work. Westergaard and Resler note that

"...there were signs of a mild increase in social mobility over the 1950s; but not such as to make for any marked alteration in the pattern of unequal opportunity of partial inheritance of position from one generation to the next."¹³

Inheritance of wealth, position and advantage pull one way to restrict circulation while demands for greater use of people pull the other loosening inhibitions on "talent" and "merit". However, the expansion of the education system - often held up as the "great equaliser" - has not resulted in greater opportunities for children in the lower classes. While the average has risen disparities between classes remain sharp. Educational qualifications

"... no more confer privilege in themselves than they ever did: they are just more important as preconditions for access to positions of privilege. The foundations and the status trimmings of class inequality are not altered merely because the mode of recruitment to particular positions have changed."14.

So even the education system which supposedly gives everyone the same chance is much more favourable to the upper classes, even when the working class parents' aspirations are high.

Thus, from the basic inequality of material wealth spring inequalities in all other spheres of life. Inequality of opportunity is a necessary feature of capitalism for those at the top want to safeguard their privileges and to pass them on to their families. And even if this were not the case the sheer material conditions they can provide for their children makes it hard for them not to succeed to at least the level of their parents. A pattern of inequality is emerging for closely related inequalities bring about sharp divisions in life circumstances and these correspond to three rough categories.

Manual workers, service workers, shop assistants and lower-grade clerks are an illustration of the type of worker to be found at the bottom of the hierarchy. The next category up consists of types such as foremen, supervisors, technicians, senior clerks and school teachers. And right at the top are the managers, directors, high officials and professional employees. Two major lines of cleavage stand out in the labour market though in detail the situation is more complex; the first line separates off 75% of the population

as wage earners from the 15-20% who are in between; the second line separates off the latter group from the 5-10% at the top.¹⁵

For the 75% of the population at the bottom the common features in their situation stand out very sharply. Apart from their low range of earnings there is a good deal of unpredictability associated with their type of job. Unemployment is an ever-present threat, wages can vary from week to week, the type of job to be performed can be changed at others' discretion. For manual workers especially there are a great many factors which can have an effect on their wages; hours worked, bonus, overtime, "dirty money", etc. Sickness payments, holiday schemes and pension schemes are often non-existent and usually not as good as those of other classes.

Because of the sheer size of the working class and because these people sell their labour power on the market there are disparities of income and wealth within this class. There are marked differences in market position between sub-groups of rank and file labour due to, for example, level of skills, sex differences or the ability to corner a specific piece of the market. Because of this, issues can divide or unite workers: sometimes linking up struggles and interests of workers from different areas or skills; and sometimes it is impossible for two groups of workers doing the same job, in the same union, in the same factory to agree. Nevertheless, the common features of their situation are much more distinctive than their differences.

Low-grade clerks - the petty salariat - are included in this class because of the wage-earning nature of their jobs and because many of these posts are for semi-skilled operatives in office work. There appears to have been a "proletarianisation" of large sections of the petty bourgeoisie; "The position especially of low-grade office and sales employees as workers who live

by the sale of their labour power has been accentuated ... by their loss of wage advantage."¹⁶. Thus, the gap between them and managers and administrators has widened.

At the other end of the scale the upper class are not dependent on the labour market in the same way as the working class for they effectively control their own pay and set their own conditions and definition of the job. They can afford to make use of tax loopholes and are close to those who administer state power to ensure the continuation of their life style.

Westergaard and Resler believe that:

"... individual ownership of capital is firmly concentrated in this small cluster at the top, especially among the controllers of private business. Their property holdings are a major source of income and security, as well as of power."¹⁷.

Between these two classes lie the middle class who generally enjoy better wages and this, along with their share in authority and fringe benefits, helps tie them to the minority above them rather than the majority below them. Their life style is a modest version of their superiors; promotion, security, predictability. There are many differences within this cluster and Westergaard and Resler argue that they form "... a social and political buffer group; and their position provides a goal on which the individual aspirations of people further down the scale may focus."¹⁸. They also perform extremely useful functions for the capitalist class.

From this it is clear that there is a well-developed class system in Britain and that it continues to exist because of the persistence of capitalism as the mode of production. Critics of this position have argued that the state in general and the welfare system in particular have eroded the power of capitalism. Against this Westergaard and Resler argue that:

"Private ownership of capital is the key to class divisions in Britain as in other capitalist countries. Taxation and public welfare provision have done little to alter the broad pattern of material inequality between classes, because the objectives and effects of public policy are limited - though they are not rigidly fixed - by the needs and influence of business in an economy where private enterprise continues to play the predominant role."¹⁹.

Workers do benefit from the social services for in its capacity as the welfare state it acts as an agent for collective self-security. The welfare state is certainly not benevolent for although half of the money it spends is on social services workers themselves pay for these. Wealth is not redistributed from top to bottom rather it is shifted about within classes. The effect of state action on the distribution of income in contrast to that of private capital is very small.

Even though working-class discontent has led to social reform this has not led to popular control of social services. In fact, the whole area of the state is completely out of the control of common people and instead shades into the control of working-class struggle. The welfare state smooths off the rough edges of insecurity and educates and looks after the health and the workforce to tolerable standards of efficiency. Power is still in the hands of a small group of officials who take decisions on the basis of the ideology of the capitalist system which is concerned with profit, not the needs of the workers.

State involvement in economic production has not shifted power from capital to labour. Westergaard and Resler argue that

"... the growth of business and government, hand in hand, has eroded competition, but left private profit intact as the prime motor of the economy and private property intact as its institutional foundation."²⁰.

The state supports the right of capitalists through its legal sanctification of property. It does not simply manage the common affairs of capitalists for it is caught within the assumptions of capitalism.

The state has tried to make conditions as suitable as possible for the generation of profit by controlling the economic environment, lessening risks to business, controlling union/business conflict and generally repressing shop-floor militancy. At all times the state's economic activities have been directed to making it possible for capital to exploit labour. A key area of this is through promoting the belief that capitalism is necessary and indispensable. At no time are these or the state's relation to capital ever questioned.

One last problem remains before it can be concluded that class relations are the determining feature in a capitalist society. It is argued that class is blurred or overridden by stratification based on sex, colour, age or region. While accepting that these may contribute to the totality of inequality Westergaard and Resler argue that: "None of them in itself produces the communality of condition which marks class position in the economic order."²¹ Further, class gives inequalities of sex, age, colour, region different shape and form at different levels of the class structure. In both ways class cleavage is dominant.

Turning to colour specifically it is often argued that colour discrimination is a divisive force. The coloured population is seen as a sub-proletariat, as a dark-skinned under-class beneath the white social order. But the coloured population is not uniformly concentrated at the bottom. Because of the heterogeneity of circumstances discrimination is diverse in form and impact. This approach also obscures the over-riding common features in the dependent condition of both white and black labour.

Britain's coloured population do not share the same position in society but they are discriminated against on the basis of colour though this takes different forms. While coloured workers may be made redundant first coloured doctors are seldom exposed to that risk. However, they may face fewer opportunities for promotion than white doctors. Many of the problems facing coloured people which are supposedly due to colour discrimination are not necessarily so. Take, for example, housing; coloured families have fallen foul of the old practice of council house managers to house the poorer and less respectable of their tenants in the worst houses. This is a common disability of class irrespective of colour.

Research into race relations has pointed out colour barriers but failed to examine the class divisions behind them. Whether or not blacks are a sub-proletariat there will always be poverty and inequality in Britain while there is capitalism. What is important are the processes which create classes not who happens to be in them. If colour discrimination disappeared tomorrow the only result would be a slight reshuffling of personnel within classes, for the range and roots of class inequality would be left unchanged.

Colour discrimination is only one handicap in the general series of impediments in a class society and it presupposes and operates within the wider capitalist system. Westergaard and Resler argue that the classes are

"... carved out by inequalities of wealth and welfare, power and opportunity. They are clearcut in outline; broadly coincident by different criteria, and thus mutually reinforcing; resistant to change through ameliorative reform; predominant over divisions of sex and age, region and colour, which are sometimes said to cut across them and break up the simplicity of the pattern."²².

It has been demonstrated that Britain is a capitalist country with a corresponding class structure. These classes exist in distinct relations to one another and to the means of production. Thus, the upper class exploit the working class while the middle class partially exploit the working class and are partially exploited by the upper class. In its actual working the class structure is extremely complex especially amongst the middle classes and around class barriers.

Identifying a group of people as members of a specific class also means identifying the inequalities that go with this membership and their relation to other groups and classes. The structure of the class system is by definition the structure of class inequality - the two are inseparable. A group's class position defines the opportunities they have, handicaps they face, and general life chances. This factor is not just one of several factors for it plays a determining role upon all other aspects of life.

At an empirical level class has been demonstrated to exist and it has been shown that a group's class position must be thoroughly examined. However, what has been discussed up till now is "class in itself". The discussion must now proceed to examine at a theoretical level Marx's concepts of class, class conflict and class consciousness. The distinction between "class in itself" and "class for itself" must be discussed and the latter concept must be examined.

The Marxist Concept of Class

A common criticism of Marxism is that it is "economic determinism". This usually arises from a failure to fully understand Marxism and instead to see in it a simple determining relationship between base and superstructure.

Marx wrote that "... in all forms of society there is one specific kind of production which predominates over the rest, whose relations thus assign rank and influence to the others."²³. But this does not mean that he regarded the economic element as the only determining one.

On the contrary, Marx believed that "empirical factors" such as the natural environment, race relations or differences of age or region influenced the economic base so that the same economic base could show infinite gradations and variations in different societies. Political forms and forces do have autonomy to varying degrees and to what extent must be judged according to specific circumstances. Then it is possible to establish the extent to which they in turn affect, determine and condition the economic realm.

Part of the problem arises from the terminology used by Marxists. Determination is often taken as meaning "inevitably caused by" or as "independent of human will". Instead Marx put the origin of determination in people's own activities. It is one of Marx's basic propositions that the base determines the superstructure. Rather than see this relationship as predicted or controlled, he saw it as "setting limits" or "exerting pressure" for it was only determined "in the last instance". The relationship was dialectical, not a one-way process.

So when Marx talked about the base determining the superstructure he did not mean that the base was static and fixed nor that determination meant predicting or controlling nor that the superstructure simply mirrored the base. Instead he believed that the base consisted of people's activities in real social, economic and political relationships. The base is therefore a

process which contains contradictions and variations. Similarly, the superstructure is riven with contradictions for it is the related range of cultural practices. It is not "reflected" because determination sets limits and the superstructure acts back on the base.

Even in the fundamental concept of the base Marx recognised contradictions and the notion of process. Any particular stage of development of production was regarded neither as uniform nor static. People's activities and relationships are the real force behind production and so there are contradictions within the base and the superstructure. Production was a central notion for Marx not only in the sense of commodity production but also in the sense that people produce themselves, society and their history - i.e. real life.

On this basis it is possible to argue that there cannot be a pure class model because the development of the mode of production is dialectical so societies contain residues of a previous mode of production. Bearing this in mind it can be established that for Marx the crucial notion in the "objective" determination of classes is the relations to the means of production.

Marx did not define class in terms of job, income or consumption but instead by the relations it bears with the mode of production. On a basic, economic level people are related to the means of production in specific ways and on this basis form specific classes. These constitute classes in themselves for while they can objectively be discerned as classes they are not conscious of their relations to other classes or of their interests as specific classes. To establish whether they are classes for themselves requires study of other social forces.

However, it is not enough to simply identify classes in this fashion for the mode of production conditions the social relations that arise on the basis of economic relations. Swingewood argues that Marx's theory of class emphasises the economic relation between the mode and relations of production and the people's subjective awareness of their conditions and relations to other classes.²⁴ The conjunction of objective and subjective creates class consciousness. The essence of class then is the social relations thrown up by people's relations to the means of production and to one another.

Although Marx identified three main classes through their relations to the means of production it is important to stress that there are important divisions within these classes so that no class is homogenous. Marx noted that "... the stratification of classes does not appear in its pure form".²⁵ So there are no neat divisions between who is actually in each class, and within classes there can be many differences.

In his polemical works Marx portrayed a two-class model but his detailed studies of class formation led him to a view of class structure as composed of three main classes. He did not believe that classes were homogenous and regarded them as composed of clusters of groups which shared similar aspirations, values, interests and work functions but which nevertheless frequently diverged on specific issues. His theory of class therefore stressed the highly complex, dialectical development of social stratification, which would be compounded by industrialisation.

The proletariat were the most important class in Marx's view for they were the only class which could destroy capitalism and in its place establish a socialist society. The proletariat do not own the means of production and instead must sell their labour power on the market to capitalists. In this context the notion of "productive worker" is crucial.

This refers to workers who produce surplus value (i.e. creates more value than it costs) for capitalists in the form of profits. This is the basis of the exploitative relationship between classes.

The notion of worker includes everybody who produces surplus value. While the core of the working class are the industrial wage earners the notion also includes white-collar and service workers for what is produced is the "common product" of a group of persons. Milliband argues that:

"The "working class" is therefore that part of the "collective labourer" which produces surplus value, from a position of subordination, at the lower ends of the income scale, and also at the lower ends of what might be called the "scale of regard".²⁶.

For Marx, the middle class contained small producers, petit-bourgeoisie, those engaged in the "circulation of commodities", middle men, managers and their assistants, supervisors, clerks, lawyers, journalists, artists, clergy, military and police. He argued that the development of capitalism would augment this class. The effects of this would be highly complex: on the one hand, the increasing productivity of labour would augment the middle class (unproductive labour) while on the other the concept of "productive labour" is enlarged.

The actual effect has been the development of specialised occupations (for example, engineers, scientists) tied to capital as the administrative arm of exploitation on the one hand and the development of a broad white-collar stratum which has many similarities with the working class. At one end of this middle class then there are clerks whose wages have fallen dramatically and who are now joining trade unions and at the other there are professionals who have the same interests as the capitalist class.

A very small group of people compose the capitalist class. This is the dominant class because it owns the means of production through which other classes find their living. Through this ownership it exploits the working class in particular and extracts surplus value in the form of profits. This class is also dominant for it sets the beliefs on which its position is founded and uses all its resources to continue its material and intellectual domination.

Apart from the owners of capital there are also those who control the means of production and those who fulfil professional functions for capitalists. Capital can take many forms, for example ownership of land, of factories and of wealth for investment. Like other classes Marx noted that it was not homogenous and that different clusters of capitalists had different interests within it.

With the growth of joint stock companies Marx recognised a change in form, to some extent, of the relations of production amongst the capitalist class. However, members of the capitalist class still own and control property so there is no fundamental break with Marx's analysis of capitalism. Ownerless managers are concerned with profit maximisation and the accumulation of capital; they still control the operations of capitalist enterprise.

Class Domination & Class Consciousness

Swingewood points out that the concept of class "... lies in the relations of domination and subordination with other classes".²⁷ The existence of a capitalist class is impossible without the existence of an exploited working class. Capitalism is distinguished as a distinct economic system because in it labour power becomes a commodity. Thus, the definition of capitalism is tied to the existence of a class system which links capital and wage labour and for Marx it was this which created the

"superstructure" of social relationships in a capitalist society.

Capitalist domination is rooted in the exploitation of the working class and as such is based in the mode of production. The capitalist class must continue this process of domination in the face of class conflict. Signs of contradiction between contending classes appear in revolts, strikes and demonstrations. These represent actual signs of the permanent alienation and conflict which exists within capitalist society.

Marx believed that the primary conflict in capitalist society was that between capitalists and the working class. Other conflicts (such as religious or ethnic) did exist but the underlying one was taken to be class conflict. In his view all manifestations of social life are present in the ongoing class conflict of capitalist society. For Marx then, class domination is economic, political and cultural and class conflict is inherent in capitalism and incapable of solution within that system.

To maintain its domination of society the capitalist class must dominate other classes materially and ideologically. It has already been established that it maintains its material domination through its ownership of the means of production. The way in which it maintains ideological domination will be examined later but first class consciousness will be discussed for it is through the failure of the working class to achieve this that the capitalist class can maintain its domination.

The primary agency of social consciousness are the personal relations which arise on the basis of purely economic ones. When people become aware of the specific relations they are in with other people and other classes they

have begun to develop an elementary class consciousness. The development of class consciousness is dialectical and it is contradictory in structure.

Swingewood argues that:

"Class consciousness is compounded from the most diverse contradictions embracing the fetishism of commodities, nationalist sentiments, political reformism and class identification".²⁸

It is essential to stress that Marx did not see the development of class consciousness as even or simple. He believed that it would develop unevenly and be riven with contradictions. This is especially the case with the working class for they must develop class consciousness in the face of opposition from the dominant ideology. In any case a class must have consciousness otherwise it is only a mass. Once it becomes aware of its collective interests and begins to defend these against other classes a class has developed consciousness and can be called a "class for itself".

Milliband argues that the capitalist class is class conscious for its members are conscious of their "true" interests - i.e. the maintenance and defence of capitalism. Further, the capitalist class is falsely conscious for it sets up its own partial and class interests as universal and classless. However, Milliband points out (and this is true of all classes) that while a class may have a clear perception of its interests this does not mean that it also has a clear perception of how best to further these interests. That is why, for example, the capitalist class is often split over the best way of avoiding economic crisis.

Unlike the capitalist class the middle class has not developed class consciousness. In fact it is incapable of developing a consciousness of its own. This is largely because it consists of so many diverse strata; from top administrators to low-paid clerks, consultants to shop assistants. Many of the clusters are bound materially and ideologically to the capitalist class.

Others are objectively linked to the working class but the majority resonate a conservative ideology. Some of the clusters are openly defined as reactionary by Marx, for example, the petit-bourgeoisie. In a revolutionary situation then this class will split because it can not develop a class consciousness on its own.

Working-class consciousness is created in struggle for it is only then that the working class can see its real interests as opposed to those of capitalists and the dominant ideology. Swingewood argues that:

"... the contradictions which characterise working-class consciousness, the results of the complex determination of class structure are explicable only when related to the objective structure of capitalist exploitation, alienation and ideology".²⁹.

In the sense that working-class consciousness involves the understanding that capitalism must be overthrown for the emancipation of all people and the will to overthrow it then it is also revolutionary consciousness. Capitalism necessitates the continued domination and exploitation of the working class and to rid itself of this oppression the working class must ultimately rid itself of the capitalist class. Thus, the revolutionary role of the working class is determined by the nature of capitalism.

Because there have been no successful revolutions³⁰. it is often argued that Marx was wrong to argue that the working class was the only class capable of overthrowing capitalism. However, it does not follow that because there appears to be a lack of a will to insurrection and because the working class appears to be content to push for reforms within capitalism that there is a lack of class consciousness. Following Marx and Engels it is possible to argue that there are many obstacles to the development of

revolutionary consciousness but because the working class faces the deprivations, shortcomings and contradictions of capitalism all the time it will become conscious of the need to destroy it.

Nevertheless, capitalism has proved remarkably adept at maintaining itself through crises. These crises can present opportunities for the possible development of working-class consciousness but unless this consciousness does develop capitalist equilibrium is re-established. The factors which impede the development of working-class consciousness need to be examined.

Through the dominant ideology the capitalist class attempts to "universalise" and to give "ideal" form to limited, class-bound ideas and interests. This false representation of society is not simply a clever deception put forward by the "ruling class". Deliberate deception occurs but more often there is self-deception for capitalists do believe in the universal truth of their ideas.

Even so the exploitative relationship between capital and labour is mystified and hidden from view in conscious and unconscious forms. The appearance of free, equal exchange hides the truth that workers are exploited by capitalists for surplus value. Money can create illusions of equality between people who are unequal in terms of property and opportunity thus hiding the exploitative relationship. Although workers are coming to see class in terms of money they also have class images of politics.

Marx believed that capitalism created in workers the belief that the conditions of that mode of production were self-evident laws of nature.

He saw this process happening in two ways: through the daily routine of work - the subordination to the factory process - workers could see no alternative; the belief in the primacy of capitalism was propagated through education, the laws and a myriad of social institutions. What is important here is that there are contradictory forces at work.

In the development of class consciousness the work process reinforces the notions that the worker is in a subordinate position through the hierarchial organisation of labour and that capitalism cannot be challenged. It also mystifies the relations of production and makes them appear as relations between people and things instead of social relations. However, capitalism necessarily brings workers together thus providing them with the opportunity to recognise their joint position and to unite and organise themselves on that basis.

The capitalist class is therefore caught between the necessity of organising industry in the most economical way possible and the necessity of preventing the emergence of class consciousness. That is why attempts have been made to curb workers' organisations on the shop floor, for example through compulsory use of postal ballots. This also illustrates the contradictory positions held within the capitalist class. Opinion has oscillated noticeably between the use of the forces of law and order to break this organisation and the attempts to win workers' representatives into collusion with management.

Tradition shapes the consciousness of workers but here again there are contradictions for there are traditions of dissent and conformity. Through the family and the local community a tradition of militancy or of acceptance can be passed on. Through schools the necessity of capitalism and the

sanctification of private property is passed on. The rights of private property are written into laws and defended by the police and the armed forces.

To defend its interests the capitalist class utilises many institutions and agencies, such as its political parties which are specifically designed to do so and others, such as the family and education which serve its purpose to greater and lesser degrees. The mass media, intentionally or not, serves the purpose of the capitalist class. Whatever else it achieves it helps to retard the development of class consciousness in the working class. In this way tradition is mediated to serve the interests of the capitalist class where possible.

It is not the case that the dominant ideology is forced upon an unwilling working class for some aspects of it are accepted wholly and enthusiastically. In other cases there is complete antagonism between the contending classes. The "battle of ideas" so to speak, goes on all the time on many fronts. Milliband believes that there is a many-sided and permanent challenge directed at the ideological predominance of the capitalist class and that this is steadily eroding that predominance.³¹

A more sophisticated view of the process of domination is advanced by Williams.³² Most aspects of capitalist domination are accepted without much thought for they appear as "given", as "common sense" or as the limits on thought and action. However, ideas, beliefs and thought which oppose the dominant ideology do arise and are not stamped out as soon as they appear. Further, the dominant ideology is a process and is not monolithic for it constantly changes to accommodate and oppose new ideas. If it loses one battle it has to change if it is to continue as the dominant ideology.

Williams introduces "hegemony" to describe something which saturates society and constitutes the limit of common sense for nearly everybody. This concept emphasises the facts of domination. Hegemony has its own highly complex internal structures which are continually maintained and defended and which can be challenged and to an extent modified. It is dominant and effective because it is the central system of practices, meanings and values and these are organised and lived by everybody in their day-to-day existence; it constitutes reality for it is difficult for people to go beyond it in their daily lives.

An effective and dominant culture depends on the process of incorporation; education is cultural and economic and transmits the effective, dominant culture; in the "selective tradition" a selection of the significant past takes place which emphasises certain meanings and practices; through wider social training, for example the family; through the practical definitions and organisations of work. The reality of an effective and dominant culture depends on people living and experiencing these in their daily lives.

There can be alternatives and oppositions to the effective dominant culture but these depend on precise social and political forces. Because hegemony is continually active and adjusting it can tolerate and accommodate alternative opinions, attitudes, meanings and values. Some oppositions can be fought out within the central effective and dominant definitions such as parliamentary politics. Alternatives and oppositions can be either residual or emergent.

Some meanings, expressions and values cannot be verified or expressed in terms of the dominant culture but are practised through a residue of some previous social formation, for example certain notions derived from a rural past. Incorporation may take place for too much is a risk to the dominant culture. New meanings, values, expressions, practices and experiences are continually being created. They are "emergent" and an attempt is made to incorporate them early for they are and yet are not part of effective contemporary practice.

Emergent cultural practice can come from the "coming to consciousness" of a new class. Williams argues that: "... no mode of production ... and therefore no dominant culture, in reality exhausts human practice, human energy, human intention".³³ Emergent cultural practice exists outside the dominant culture but the difficulties facing it depend on whether the dominant culture has an interest and stake in it. It might not even recognise new areas of practice and meaning.

Williams sums up this position as follows:

"In capitalist practice, if the thing is not making a profit, or if it is not being widely circulated, then it can for some time be overlooked, at least while it remains alternative. When it becomes oppositional in an explicit way, it does, of course, get approached or attacked."³⁴

Thus, in the process of incorporation the dominant culture changes in many of its articulated features but not in its central formation. To remain dominant it must change like this if it is still to be felt to be central to people's experiences, activities and interests in their daily existence.

Clearly, the approach put forward by Williams is more sophisticated than the notion of the ruling class or sections of it imposing an ideology on society. It brings out clearly that the actual ideological domination of society is both a conscious and unconscious process for the capitalist

class do believe in the need for and the universality of capitalism. Further, people do actually experience and live in a capitalist society thereby taking in the assumptions on which this society is built. Coherent opposition to the dominant ideology is difficult to mount for it seems divorced from actual, lived-in reality.

This does not mean that there is no opposition to the dominant ideology but what it does mean is that this opposition has been sporadic and largely ineffective. Britain has seen the existence of revolutionary parties for almost a hundred years but membership of them is tiny and their impact very small till recently. Strikes have been largely sectional, largely over money and rarely political. To understand this, however, requires an understanding of the dialectical relationship between the base and superstructure.

This century has largely been marked by the stability of capitalism. This is especially true from the Second World War up till the 1970s before the boom finally gave way to a slump. During this period capitalism had appeared to be able to fulfil its promise of ever-increasing wealth for everybody. Conditions did improve thus demonstrating materially what the dominant ideology argued intellectually. This is not the case now when capitalism seems unable to stabilise itself and living standards are being depressed. The dominant ideology is much more open to attack for its representation of society is being challenged and shown to be false.

Capitalism's failure to fulfil its promise is sowing the seeds of discontent and opposition is finding a wider audience. The challenge to the dominant ideology is concerned to unmask the real relations of production and social relations in capitalist society. The class nature of capitalism and the concomitant class domination can then be revealed. From this the

importance of Marx's notions of base and superstructure can be appreciated.

By adhering to this notion it is possible to recognise the material and ideological domination of the working class by the capitalist class. On the basis of material relations of production an ideological superstructure is developed which embraces real life but which is given direction and purpose by the capitalist class. By dominating ideas it retards the development of working-class consciousness which could threaten its power.

It is essential to understand that base and superstructure are meaningless abstractions unless put in the context of class society for it is this which gives them form and structure. Also, if the notion of base and superstructure is dropped it is not possible to see that laws, ideologies, theories, beliefs and practices express and ratify the domination of a particular class. Production takes place not only to provide surplus value for the capitalist class but also to maintain society itself.

This is why the capitalist class must represent itself and capitalism as necessary through the dominant ideology. Without control of ideology challenges to this domination would rise and class consciousness would rise. Through control of the means of production (the base) and ideology (the superstructure) they exploit and dominate the working class. The existence of the capitalist mode of production necessarily entails the domination of the working class materially and ideologically by the capitalist class.

Domination takes place directly in the workplace and also through the state and its institutions. The idea that the state represents society as a whole and takes decisions in the national interest is part of the ideological

veil to legitimise that rule in the eyes of the capitalist class and those of the subordinate classes. Marx regarded the state as an essential means of class domination. It must be remembered though that the ruling class is not homogenous^e and the state can take autonomous decisions which appear to favour the working class and which encroach, to some extent, on the interests of some sections of the capitalist class.

It is possible to describe the state as the "instrument" of the capitalist class principally because the capitalist mode of production determines the nature of the state. The state is a product of capitalist society and its principle function is to maintain and defend capitalism. To do this it must defend the interests of the capitalist class and therefore support the domination and exploitation of the working class. It is also worth noting that the high positions of the state are controlled by members of the capitalist class and it should be remembered that private investment by the capitalist class is the main motor of the economy.

The discussion has now turned full circle. At first the importance of base/superstructure was stressed and then it was shown that these were not divorced from each other but constantly interacted. This discussion had to be put in the context of class for it to make sense and after discussing the manifestations of the base/superstructure in class society it was concluded that class domination could not be separated from the notion of base/superstructure.

Class Analysis in Britain

In analysing groups of people in Britain class relations are of primary importance and must form an integral part of the study. To understand how and why people act it is essential to first of all place them in the class structure. Class is not the only factor which influences people's actions but it is likely to have a constraining effect upon them. A Marxist analysis does not leave out other factors simply to emphasise class.

Unfortunately, class is frequently left out at the expense of other factors.

Britain's class structure is characterised by its complexity and contradictions for many factors complicate the picture of people's relations to the means of production. Due to changes in the material conditions in Britain important changes have occurred within classes and the content of classes has changed. Because labour power is sold in a market situation the positions of different groups are constantly changing and consequently their class consciousness is also constantly fluctuating.

Westergaard and Resler pointed out that while it is possible to depict three classes in broad terms the detail on the ground is extremely complex. So, while it is possible to objectively determine any individual or group's position in the class structure they need not necessarily act in line with this or find anything in common with people in their class. There are attitudes associated with certain jobs which are totally out of character with the wages or conditions of the class in which the job is objectively associated.

Racialism can turn workers against each other making united actions and therefore the development of class consciousness impossible. As with nationalism links across classes are developed instead of coherent class consciousness. Opposed political beliefs can set people in the same class against each other. Other factors such as locality, tradition of militancy or conformity, religion or which political parties there are affect the specific relations in any place at any time and all of them must be taken into consideration.

One of the most important factors in the changes in the material conditions has been the growing crisis in capitalism since the late 1960s. Unemployment on the scale of the 1930s, a decline in productivity and a fall in the average rate of profit have resulted in dramatic changes in the class system and on class consciousness. For example, during the crisis there have been extremely important political strikes in favour of the working class as a whole. Yet, there have also been strikes against foreign workers and a racist feeling amongst some groups of workers.³⁵

In specific cases the situation is very complex and a full analysis of all available factors needs to be done. The importance of class as a determining factor must be stressed for it is absolutely wrong to leave it out of the account. In all of this the important point about Marx's dialectical method is to go beyond the simple appearance of particular phenomena and to disclose its contradictory movements and structure.

For this reason the Marxist method is far superior to those so far examined. It is historical; it begins at the most basic level of production and proceeds to incorporate human experience and the dialectical relation between the two. Through its insistence that the separation between the political, economic, social and cultural is arbitrary and artificial it gives full weight to each factor and their combination. While emphasising the role of the economic base a Marxist analysis is as concerned with how political, social and cultural processes in turn shape, condition and determine the economic realm.

On this basis it is possible to describe Asians who have taken working class jobs as part of the British working class. They are members of the working class in itself. Thus, if regardless of their culture their life chances have constraints on them because of their class position. However, to fully understand their position and activities it is necessary to examine the other factors which influence these. Attention will therefore be paid to the interaction between the environment in Britain and the beliefs and practices of Asians. It will then be possible to examine the possibility of Asians as part of the working class-for - itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

Asians in Britain

Before the position and actions of working-class Asians in Britain can be analysed it is necessary to first of all describe them. This chapter deals with three areas: who the Asians are, where they came from and what values they brought with them; what has happened to them since they arrived in Britain and the changes that have occurred in their traditional values and customs; an examination of the organisations that Asians have formed or become involved in.

By examining the data in this way it is possible to take a historical view of the developments, processes and trends that have taken place amongst working-class Asians. Analysis of the data is left till later chapters. All that is being attempted here is a factual assessment of Asian communities and the changes that have occurred in them.

Section 1

Britain's Asian Population

In 1971 the total Asian population in Britain was 659,490 which was composed of: 300,820 Indians; 185,120 Pakistanis¹; and 173,550 African Asians. By 1974 the total population had risen to 811,680 and this was composed of: 370,240 Indians; 227,840 Pakistanis; and 213,600 African Asians.² While the attraction of migrating to Britain was almost entirely economic immigration laws determined to a large extent the actual rate and composition of the immigrants.

The introduction of the 1962 immigration law effectively prevented

large numbers of Asians from entering Britain. In the immediate period before this law there was a rush to 'beat the ban' especially amongst unqualified and unskilled Asians. Afterwards, the composition of immigration was changed for the introduction of a voucher system only allowed skilled and qualified people to enter Britain along with the dependants of those immigrants already here.

Only 37% of Pakistanis, 34% of Indians and 5% of African Asians had entered Britain before 1962. Between 1962-8 (i.e. between the two immigration laws) 38% of Pakistanis, 46% of Indians and 39% of African Asians entered Britain.³ Thus, 30% of all Asians had arrived in Britain before 1962 and 68% had arrived before 1968 and so have lived for a considerable period in Britain.

With the large scale entry of dependants the balance between the sexes began to reach normal. Up till 1964 males comprised 90% of the Pakistani population, 69% of the Indian and 66% of the African Asian. The most recent figures are 65%, 56% and 56% respectively. The most striking case is the Pakistani one for 86% of them entering Britain up till 1966 were men but from 1967 onwards only 32% were men.⁴

With the development of Asian communities the numbers of children born in Britain has risen considerably. 95% of children under the age of five were born here as were 83% of those aged 5-9 and 51% of the 9-14 year olds.⁵ 1.8% of adults were born in Britain so there are very few grandparents which has important implications in a community in which they traditionally have important roles to play.⁶

Area of Origin and Social Background

Of all Indian immigrants 56% came from the Punjab, 16% came from Gujarat and 19% came from other (mostly northern) parts of India. Among Pakistanis 8% came from Bangladesh, 37% came from Mirpur and Kashmir, 37% came from the Punjab, 5% came from Karachi and 8% from other areas. African Asians came mainly from Kenya (49%) and also Uganda (26%) and Tanzania (8%).⁷

More than half of the Indian immigrants are Punjabis and of them roughly 90% come from Doaba in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur Districts which is an area only 50 miles across.⁸ In East Africa the largest caste amongst the Asian immigrants were the Patidars who originally came from a small area in Central Gujarat.⁹ The Bengalees come mainly from the district of Sylhet in North-East Bangladesh.¹⁰ Britain's Pakistani population is extremely heterogeneous though the largest groups come from the Punjab and the Mirpur District of the Pakistani part of Kashmir which is a rural area in North Pakistan.

The bulk of the immigrants to Britain came from rural areas. However, there are important differences between different groups; amongst Indians, for example there is a wide spread in educational qualifications whereas Pakistanis are on the whole less qualified.¹¹ Nevertheless, by 1962 the majority of male heads of households had arrived and these men were overwhelmingly from rural areas.

Sikhs from the Punjab emigrated from very fertile and prosperous land which, however, was very densely populated. The Ballards note that: "The bulk of emigrants have been drawn from families of medium wealth in the rural areas: the wealthy have no reason to go and the

poorest are unable to finance the journey'.¹² James estimates that the majority come from the '30-acre class'.¹³ On the whole these men were poorly educated.¹⁴

Unlike the Sikhs, Pakistani villagers from Mirpur District are faced with an area which is poor for farming. Further, there is heavy fragmentation of land. Villages vary in size and the social structure differs from settlements dominated by large land-owners to others with large numbers of medium to small landowners.¹⁵ In an even worse situation are the Bengalees who came from the district of Sylhet which is a poverty-stricken rural area.¹⁶

Asians from East Africa differ markedly from these other groups. Many came with substantial sums of money and were in a position to set up in business and/or to buy their own house. Originally, the Patidars (the largest group from East Africa) were concentrated in a small, fertile area of central Gujarat. By rural standards they had a fairly high standard of living. Their standard of education is fairly high and from their experience of living in Africa they had a relatively good knowledge of English.¹⁷

Not all those who came from rural areas were peasants. Taylor's study in Newcastle found that while 60% of his sample came from rural areas only 4% had been farmers. 22% had been shopkeepers, manufacturers or entrepreneurs and 21% had been employees. These groups were evenly divided between town and country. Taylor's sample included a substantial middle-class element of more than a third.¹⁸

In their study Allen et al argued that immigrants come from a wide range of jobs and are not all peasants.¹⁹ Their figures for

Indian and Pakistani businessmen show that many had owned businesses in their own countries.²⁰ Of those businessmen relatively few were engaged in agriculture before coming to Britain and fewer still were industrial workers.²¹ This fits in with the general pattern: a polarisation between uneducated peasants of medium wealth who mainly arrived before 1962 on the one hand and professionals and businessmen on the other who mainly arrived after this time.

Religion and the Family

In India as a whole 84% of the population are Hindu, 10% Moslem and 2% Sikh. Pakistanis are nearly all Moslems. However, because immigrants have come from specific areas this pattern has been disrupted. 95% of Pakistanis, 20% of Indians and 15% of African Asians are Moslems. 62% of African Asians are Hindu as are 26% of Indians. 43% of Indians and 19% of African Asians are Sikhs.²²

Religion is an important element in the social background of Asian immigrants. James reports that religion plays a 'fairly important' part in the life of Sikhs.²³ Aspects of Sikh religion, for example long hair and turbans, represent a symbolic act of pride. Jeffrey believes that one of the reasons that Pakistanis see Pakistan as their home is because Islam is dominant there.²⁴ Amongst Pakistanis there is no clear distinction between the religious and the secular. Religion permeates all aspects of life placing restrictions on eating and drinking habits, dress, marriage practices, sex roles and other aspects of social action. There is an important difference between these religions for unlike Sikhism and Hinduism, Islam has been codified into practical rules and so is not dependent on the local context.

It is in the family that religion has its greatest influence. Hashmi reports that the Koran lays great stress on family responsibility.²⁵ Only religion overshadows the importance of the family as an economic unit for Moslems. Other aspects of the family are that it provides legal procreation, the social rearing of children and political ties. The family is responsible for the early religious education of their children.

Among Hindus and Sikhs the tradition is "... the father, the mother and the guru- these three are always to be obeyed".²⁶ Respect for parents is extremely important and amongst Moslems disobedience to parents is a major sin. The tie between tradition, religion and beliefs and practices is extremely close. Thus, for Hindus and Sikhs an arranged marriage is one of their most sacred duties and it is seen as a crucial test of the parents' success in socialising the younger generation into their cultural tradition.

Religion, through the family, plays an extremely important part in determining sex roles and the authority structure amongst Asians. The head of the family is usually the senior male member and he can intervene in the affairs of the other members of the family. Parallel to this, however, is the notion of mother dominance which James believes is a "... very strong character of Sikh men!".²⁷ In the traditional village environment choice about job, marriage partners or religion is in the hands of parents and elders.

Amongst Asians the extended family is the main social unit and it functions as an economic, moral and jural entity. Moslem family bonds are strong and patriarchal and family decisions are taken

by men. Wives are expected to clean and cook for their husbands who are expected to discipline the children. On the one hand this closeness means that everyone's actions constantly come under scrutiny but on the other it means security and a strong sense of belonging on which to fall back. As Wilson puts it: "To break out of the family's arm-lock you also have to cast off its embrace".²⁸

The notion of family honour (izzat) is extremely strong and actions which threaten it may be harshly dealt with. Family prestige is unanimously viewed as sacrosanct according to Anwar.²⁹ Girls especially are watched very carefully for if they bring disgrace upon the family the family can be ostracised, treated with contempt and their other children may not find marriage partners.³⁰ Creating wealth and gaining land are done for themselves and also to increase the family's izzat.

Because of the close family ties children remain very dependent on their parents even after they are married. James reports that amongst Sikhs this can result in prolonged immaturity: for example, Indian newspapers report stories about 'a boy of 30' or 'a youth of 35'.³¹ Punjabi girls are brought up to find fulfillment in caring for their children. In their teens girls' activities increasingly centre on the home whereas boys are allowed greater freedom to go out with their friends.

Moslem women are not supposed to appear or behave in public in a manner which is immodest or unbecoming. This order is interpreted widely from women who veil their faces (purdah) to those who believe it is only necessary to restrain from excessive exposure and

immodesty.³² While women may be educated it is not thought that they should go out to work. The sanctity of marriage is regarded as extremely important.

In the peasant societies from which most Asians come women are never considered significant contributors to the economic needs of the family. Instead, their most important economic roles are the production and servicing of labour.³³ Even though lower caste women have begun to work in the fields sons are still regarded as more important. No celebration is held on the birth of a girl and girls are still regarded as a liability.

Wilson believes that Asian women's lives are determined by three main concepts:

"... the male ego whose nurturing, preserving and boosting is considered of vital importance; a sense of hierarchy which is considered synonymous with the existence of the family; and finally the closeness of relationships - the bonds which provide consolation".³⁴

Women are traditionally regarded as submissive and passive, and they are seen as the guardians of traditional religious and social values. Divorce, while permitted is socially unapproved.

Traditional Social Ties and Political Organisation

Apart from the strong ties within the joint family there are other important ones. Referring to Mirpuri villagers Saifullah Khan notes the existence of biradari (brotherhood) ties.³⁵ The biradari is an endogamous group who claim a common male ancestor. It extends to other villages and closely related biradari members who live at long distances remain in close touch and attend important family functions. The biradari is also important for mobilising

Pakistanis in politics. Villagers often have close ties with people of the same quom (caste) and this can be important in certain situations.

In the Punjab Sikhs from ilaga groups which are composed of men from adjacent villages. Village ties are viewed as similar to kinship ties. There is a unity among the members on many issues, such as politics. The specific group of villages where a person is born creates ties which can be more important than, for example, caste membership depending upon the situation.

Political power in rural India resides in panchayats (local councils) and in the various branches of the state and national governments.³⁶ Statutory panchayats are responsible for tax collection and minor judicial powers and the members of it are elected by the villagers. Traditional panchayats are responsible for enforcing customary law and mobilising villagers for some common effort. Some of these include the heads of all families and others only prominent villagers.

John argues that:

"... in village India the struggle for political power is, in large part, the struggle for control of the local panchayats and the competition for the votes of the villagers in state and local elections".³⁷

Struggles are between loose alliances called paRTi which have no formal structure, no programme and no hierarchy of leadership. After one or a few contests they disintegrate. Influence and personal rivalries change over the years rather than months.

There are rarely more than two or three paRTis involved in any one

conflict. The components are durable (i.e. kin groups and groups of friends) but the coalitions they form are not. John believes that there are four kinds of ties which determine what paRTi villagers support: kinship; economic dependence or inter-dependence; friendship; and obligations for favours. Members of the same household support the same paRTi. Gotras (clan) should be, but often are not united while castes are almost always divided in their support for a paRTi.

In the Punjab many men of scheduled (untouchable) castes are agricultural labourers for Jat farmers. This is often hereditary and they may support their patron's paRTi. Members of artisan castes may have similar hereditary economic relationships with Jat families but since the artisans are usually wealthier than the scheduled castes they are less dependent on the goodwill of the Jats. Economic ties can reinforce or cut across kinship ties. Friendship ties are often indistinguishable from the other ones. Leaders acting as patrons and brokers, can put people in their obligation.

PaRTis emerge during elections and also for other conflicts such as lawsuit. They may also organise festivals to increase their prestige and to humiliate their rivals. Competition for power and prestige is closely intertwined and structured in terms of paRTi rivalries. John argues that strong feelings about public issues do not usually underlie rural politics in India (though this seems over-generalised). Traditional loyalties to paRTis may be losing influence due to the efforts of political parties to create new bases of loyalty and the extension of self-government to the villages through statutory panchayats.

Section 2

The Pattern of Migration

Much the same pattern of migration can be noted for the majority of Asian immigrants. This pattern does not apply to professionals and students who come on an individual basis or to East African Asians who were in the main expelled from the East African countries that they lived in. The Ballards have established a typology of what may be called 'chain migration'.³⁸

Four phases have been established in the pattern of settlement. In the first phase individual pioneers (initially ex-seamen and later pedlars) began to settle in the major cities in Britain during the two wars. Thus, small nuclei of Asians were established. After the end of the last world war the second phase began as a result of the huge demand for labour in British industry. Mass migration took place and the majority of the Asian migrants lived in densely packed all-male houses in inner-city areas.

About 1960 the third phase began to develop with the large-scale entry of wives and children. This was accompanied by "... a move to less crowded housing conditions and a general consolidation of the ethnic settlement".³⁹ Lastly, the movement towards better housing out of 'unsalubrious ghettos'.⁴⁰ By now, children have become adults having passed through the British education system. This takes the development of Asian communities up till the early 1970s and it is to be assumed that this process has continued with little change.

In the 1950s the migrants came to Britain to earn as much money as possible in the shortest time.⁴¹ As the number increased

arrangements became structured by the pioneers who were able to set themselves up as specialists in finding the newcomers jobs and accommodation quickly. As the settlements grew in size these social networks began to be confined to migrants from a specific area, caste or group of villages.

Earlier settlers in Britain sponsored kinsmen; a man would stay for a few years and then be replaced by a younger brother or nephew. Saifullah Khan writes:

"So particular areas, such as Mirpur, established a tradition of migration, and particular families or villages in each area established a 'chain' between Britain and Mirpur". 42

Dahya believes that:

"... the process of growth and subsequent development of the immigrant community is one of fusion of immigrants from different areas leading to a fission and segmentation on the basis of village-kin ties". 43

One of the problems with this general position is that the time scale of migration varies between the different groups. Pakistanis, for example, have been slowest to bring over their dependants and as a result have faced greater problems due to the immigration laws.⁴⁴ Also, local conditions are very important in determining the specific way different communities have developed. For example, in some areas the men became involved in shift work and the social life of the community developed around the shifts. In other areas, lack of private housing and the policies of local councils prevented Asians from forming strong-knit communities.

Asian Settlements

On arrival in Britain Asians have congregated in a few main areas. 40% live in South East England, 27% live in the West Midlands and 15%

in Yorks and Humber. The comparative figures for the total population are 36%, 10% and 10% respectively.⁴⁵ The area of origin has had considerable importance in determining where Asians settle in Britain. 64% of Pakistanis from Karachi settled in South East England compared with only 1% from Mirpur and Kashmir.⁴⁶

Of all Pakistanis there are 14% in London and the South East, 33% in the West Midlands, 12% in the North West, 30% in Yorks and Humber and 6% in the East Midlands. In the same regions Indians are represented as follows: 43%, 31%, 8%, 11%, 4%. African Asians are much more concentrated in London and the South East, 61%, with the others distributed as 14%, 7%, 5%, 10% respectively.⁴⁷ Within these larger areas there is often even greater concentration.

Almost 10% of Handsworth's population are Asians, mainly from India.⁴⁸ In Rochdale Pakistanis, mainly from the Punjab, are the largest migrant group and constitute 4% of the total population.⁴⁹ 46% of Southall's population are Indians, the majority of whom are Sikhs from the Punjab.⁵⁰ 10% of Bradford's population are Pakistanis, mostly from Mirpur District.⁵¹ In Huddersfield two-thirds of the Asian population are Pakistanis mostly from the Punjab.⁵² In Tower Hamlets the Asian population is some 12% and of this about 90% are Bengalees.⁵³ These examples bear out the point that 'chain migration' took place and point to the importance of village and kin ties in the process.

Having arrived in Britain and found a job immigrants immediately began to send money home. Later, migrants retained their money so as to take it home as an impressive lump sum. One way of investing the

money while in Britain was in housing. The Ballards argue that buying a house eliminated rent payments, brought income from lodgers, supporters in factional disputes, independence and prestige. The houses were a temporary investment which could be sold whenever necessary and were not a first step to settling down.⁵⁴

Dahya notes that Pakistani immigrants wanted cheap houses with short leases because they believed they only had short-term interests in Britain (i.e. saving money to return home with).⁵⁵ The houses they bought during 1964-66 cost roughly £80 and some cost as little as £45.⁵⁶ Along with this notion that migration was an investment and so buying property was financially sound Dahya asserts that Pakistanis' "... traditional bias for land ownership is the basis for their predilection for real estate in Britain".⁵⁷

Elsewhere, it is argued that there are many problems with Dahya's study.⁵⁸ What is important, however, is that what might be called overcrowding in Britain is not necessarily so for Pakistanis. It may also be the case that even the most dilapidated house in Britain is superior to those in rural Pakistan. Nevertheless, people's judgements are always relative on this matter and so as long as the judgements are made with regard to Pakistan they may feel themselves well off but by standards in Britain they are not.

Conditions, in fact, have varied widely within groups. At one end of the scale are the Patidars from East Africa of whom a relatively large number live in good residential areas in London.⁵⁹ At the other end are the Bengalee families in the East End. In 1976 around seventy families were squatting in the area. There is a high

concentration of Asians in the worst and oldest estates in this area; 2,000 Bengalees are living in slums.⁶⁰

The pattern of housing amongst Asians is worth careful attention for considering their socio-economic position they are out of proportion to the general population. 74% of Asians are owner-occupiers, 4% are council tenants and 19% rent accommodation privately.⁶¹ Whereas 20% of the general population who are unskilled, manual workers own their house, the corresponding figure for Asians is 85%.⁶²

This situation is due to the interplay of the needs of the Asians (large amounts of room which is cheap and near other Asians) and the environment. The available housing is largely unsuitable: Asians are often ineligible for council houses or have to wait longer (and only if they are aware of their rights); privately rented accommodation is usually too small and too expensive. Thus, the large, cheap, decaying houses in inner-city areas which no-one else wants are the houses which Asians have tended to buy.

Asians coming to Britain from 1970 onwards are less likely to be owner-occupiers and in fact 57% of them privately rent their accommodation.⁶³ It will probably take this group longer to buy their houses because of the pressure on the type of property they would prefer and because all property prices have risen. This will also be affected by the level of earnings of the recent immigrants and the type of house they want to purchase.

In comparison to whites, Asians consistently have a poorer standard of housing, higher density of occupation and fewer amenities in all

types of tenancy.⁶⁴ Only 50% of Asians were aware of council housing in 1975.⁶⁵ Although it will not be a great improvement for Asians substantial numbers have begun to apply for council housing. This reflects the drying up of their primary source of houses and that less emphasis is being put upon extended families.

James believes that the available accommodation is only suitable for single-family households.⁶⁶ In Taylor's study about half of his respondents lived in nuclear households. Only 15% of them lived in traditional joint households and 22% in nuclear households with other relatives such as uncles.⁶⁷ What must be kept in mind, however, is that nuclear households usually live in close proximity to one another.

It is not just the size of houses which is leading to an increased tendency for Asian families to become nuclear. Young people prefer to enjoy their entertainment away from the family.⁶⁸ The Ballards note that after marriage young couples organise their lives differently from their parents and are less keen on the joint family.⁶⁹ In another study old and young Asians said they preferred the joint family but 57% of young Asians only wanted their spouse to live in the house.⁷⁰

Employment

For all Asians: 19% are professional/white-collar; 41% are skilled manual; and 40% are semi- and unskilled manual. On these figures 80% of Asians would be characterised as working class. Only 8% of Pakistanis have professional or white-collar jobs as compared to 20% of Indians and 30% of African Asians. 33% of Pakistanis have a skilled

manual job whereas 44% of Indians and African Asians are in this category. While 58% of Pakistanis have a semi- or unskilled job, 36% of Indians have these jobs and only 26% of African Asians.⁷¹

Asians in manual jobs tend to work shifts more frequently than do whites and for Pakistanis working in textiles in the North West permanent nights is fairly common.⁷² The qualifications that Asians have are not always recognised so those that are in non-manual jobs tend to do the junior clerical and undesirable jobs which have low pay. Thus, there is very little difference in earnings between those who finished their education early or late.⁷³

There are wide differences between the job levels of Asian immigrants. Most Punjabis are unskilled or semi-skilled factory workers.⁷⁴ In London's East End the Bengalees mainly found work in the rag trade.⁷⁵ The Patidars from East Africa who were relatively well educated and fluent in English found white-collar jobs in London.⁷⁶ In foundries in the Midlands Punjabis are found concentrated in simple, direct production jobs. Pakistanis mainly perform unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in the textile industry in the Midlands.⁷⁷

Asians tend to be congregated in certain industries. The main explanation for this is that the immigrants moved to places where jobs were available. In most cases these were in declining industries such as textiles and foundries and the jobs they found were those which British workers had moved out of because of poor conditions, low pay or permanent shift work. In fact, without the influx of immigrants Britain's textile industry would have collapsed.⁷⁸

Thus, it was not 'accidental' nor due especially to 'racial discrimination' that Asians have found the jobs that they did.

It must be stressed however that not all Asians have poorly-paid jobs. In any particular area the majority are likely to be concentrated in a narrow range of industries in the worst jobs with the rest spread evenly throughout the other industries and services.⁷⁹ For example, the National Health Service is dependent on the admission of 2,500-3,000 overseas doctors per year the majority of whom are from Asia.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, it can be agreed with Allen et al that

"... the range of jobs open to first generation Asians and West Indians is more limited than for the white population, with the limitations increasing as the job carries with it better conditions, wage rates or status".⁸¹

Even those Asians who possessed some skill or qualifications have usually seen it undervalued. Asians within non-manual work are usually at the bottom end of it in junior posts or doing routine white-collar work. It is very rare for Asians to be in positions of authority. Even doctors are usually juniors and very rarely specialists or consultants. Discrimination undoubtedly exists but the main barrier for Asians has been the pre-existing structures they have encountered in the work situation.

In Tower Hamlets, Bengalees, like previous immigrant groups, are mainly employed in the rag trade. Out of Tower Hamlets' 1,000 manual council workers only 34 are coloured and the proportion is similar for white-collar workers.⁸² Instead of becoming integrated in the wider fields of employment the Bengalees have been cut off in small backshops. This is not always the case. Brook notes that because of the rule of 'promotion by seniority' in London Transport black

workers have risen to supervisory posts over white subordinates. In 1965 blacks were over-represented as guards and under-represented as motor-men; by 1970 this had become increasingly redressed.⁸³

A study by Lee and Wrench concluded that "... male immigrant workers consistently (filled) the more dangerous jobs".⁸⁴ They also noted that comparison with British workers was difficult for they seldom did the same job. Allen et al argued that 50% of their sample were on shifts and 32% of these were on permanent nights even though their impression was that relaxation rather than long hours was preferred by Asians.⁸⁵ They also noted that earnings were below average and mainly ascribed this to the type of industry in which they are concentrated.⁸⁶

These are examples of the general trend of Asians moving into pre-existing structures. Patterns of behaviour attributed to Asians' culture are in fact often nothing to do with Asians but with structures created by management and unions. For example, if a manager believes that there will be trouble if different races are mixed he will create a situation where there are Indian gangs, Pakistani gangs, etc..

Shah's study of Asians' involvement in the rag trade in London's East End illustrates the existence of a structure of work which Asians and previous immigrants have fallen in to.⁸⁷ Shah specifically concentrated on homeworkers who, because of their dispensability are an indispensable part of the structure of the fashion trade. There is a demand for homeworkers and Asian women, because of their poor English, cultural barriers and often large families have filled it.

Many evils are associated with homeworking (non-unionised, low wages, etc.) and Shah argues that Asians have become scape-goats "... obscuring the fact that the evils of the clothing industry are due to the underlying economic causes affecting all who work in it".⁸⁸ He concludes: "Given their low educational qualifications, lack of English, cultural restrictions and lack of alternative opportunities, working at home is not really a matter of choice".⁸⁹

Another example of this process is Rimmer's study of Asians in four foundries in the Midlands.⁹⁰ Labour shortages led to the large-scale recruitment of Asians who, due to the structure of foundries, became concentrated in certain areas. Although shops are isolated from each other Asians and whites worked together in the same shop. However, within shops Asians tended to be concentrated in specific tasks and so members of the same work and pay gang.

An extremely complicated piece-rate system operates in foundries which serves to fragment the workforce. Rimmer stresses that custom-and-practice rules dominated all negotiations between workers and supervisors. The basic wage was low and so the negotiations over piece-rates between workers and supervisors were very important. Differentials could be enormous between two workers doing much the same job but there was no discussion between different gangs over their piece-rates since it was a 'deal' between them and the supervisor.

The Asians tended to work in the dirty and poorly-paid jobs. They were concentrated in comparatively few occupations, mainly simple, direct production jobs. As small, fragmented work gangs the Asians did not do well out of this situation especially since the

AEF (Amalgamated Union of Engineering and Foundry Workers) was only concerned with skilled and maintenance workers. Thus, because of individual bargaining and an elitist union there was no basis for a strong workshop organisation.

Because they were relatively deprived compared to the white, skilled workers the Asians eventually organised themselves through the TGWU (Transport and General Workers Union). United, they were able to begin to change the structure of individual bargaining which did not benefit them. The Asians did not deliberately form themselves into 'ethnic work-gangs' but once in this situation they realised that they would be better off as a united group of unskilled workers which included West Indians and white female workers.

It is not the case therefore that the conditions associated with Asian work-situation (less skilled, lower wages, work more overtime and shifts and dirtier jobs) are due to discrimination. Nevertheless, discrimination in the field of employment exists and Asians are well aware of it.

The unskilled workers in one of the foundries Rimmer studied were made well aware of discrimination when skilled white workers not only crossed the Asian picket lines but stepped up production to help the management defeat a strike.⁹¹ Sikhs working for bus companies in the Midlands justifiably felt discriminated against when they were threatened with the sack for refusing to take off their turbans and wear the regulation cap when white workers did not have to wear them.⁹²

Taylor notes that 36% of his sample believed that half or more of the jobs they could do were closed to them because of discrimination while 21% put the figure between a quarter and a half. Only 10% believed that a few or no jobs were closed to them.⁹³ Morrison found that 90% of black youth in Wandsworth believed it was difficult to find a job because of their colour.⁹⁴ Allen et al found much the same and pointed out that management often discriminated against blacks rather than promote them above whites.⁹⁵

Asian youth, while aware of the problems they face, appear to be fairly optimistic about finding a good job. Taylor found that Asian youth had done as well as whites in finding apprenticeships and had been dogged in their attempts to find a job.⁹⁶ Optimism is not enough however for as unemployment rises, Asians are more likely to become unemployed, especially women and youth.⁹⁷ There are signs of this occurring; for example, in Southall, Asians are 80% of the local unemployed but only 46% of the local population. About half of the unemployed Asians are under 25.⁹⁸

Unemployment is becoming a serious threat to young and old alike for industries such as textiles where large numbers of Asians work are declaring redundancies. Parekh argues that unemployment amongst young Asians is rising faster than for any other group.⁹⁹ Other sources suggest that it closely approximates the rates of the general population.¹⁰⁰ Unemployment amongst blacks under 25 rose by 450% between Feb. 1974 and Feb. 1977 so it is likely that Asians have been affected, especially since they are in the most run-down industries.¹⁰¹

Although many Asian women have taken jobs in Britain the males in their families have often been reluctant to allow them to do so. Amongst Sikhs jobs which involve much contact with men are frowned upon and many Moslem women are banned from working by their men. Saifullah Khan argues that work beyond the home is valued for its economic gain and any threat to family life is justified by the transfer of money into consumer goods or valued skills.¹⁰² Taking a job thus involves moral and economic considerations.

For women in traditional Moslem families or who have status-conscious husbands homeworking is the only alternative. In general, poor English, cultural barriers and children make Asian women an obvious source of labour for the homeworking industry. However, in spite of the loss of izzat 21% of Moslem women work outside the home because of their families' need for money.¹⁰³

The likelihood of Asian women going out to work is linked to fluency in English and religion; for example, non-Moslem women up to 44 years old are just as likely to go out to work as white women in the same age group.¹⁰⁴ Asian women tend to take jobs as homeworkers, shop assistants and secretaries, and factory and sweat-shop workers.¹⁰⁵

Through going out to work Asian women are realising that wage labour offers them the possibility of an economic identity of their own.¹⁰⁶ Wilson believes that more and more women from a peasant background are beginning to see themselves as workers in Britain and are comparing themselves to black and white workers.¹⁰⁷ The stoical attitude towards the jobs and conditions they face

is dying out the longer and more deeply involved they become with the British industrial scene.¹⁰⁸

Strikes such as the one at Grunwicks have proved to Asian women that it is possible for them to stand up and fight for their rights. However, they have to assert themselves in the face of opposition from their men who prefer women passive. At the Grunwicks strike husbands often stopped their wives going to the picket lines. Wilson argues that in spite of this, going out on strike can increase a woman's confidence enormously.¹⁰⁹

As well as increased confidence Asian women are beginning to expect a greater say in family decisions because they earn money.¹¹⁰ Saifullah Khan believes that major changes are taking place amongst Asian women and argues that: "The trend of greater numbers of Asian women going out to work will have fundamental repercussions on relationships within the family".¹¹¹

Self-employment is seen by some Asians as a way of earning more money and being 'one's own master'. It is also seen as a way of circumventing the barriers placed on their promotion.¹¹² In some areas self-employment is quite high (in London's East End a quarter of the clothing 'factories' were owned by Asians) and in others extremely high (57% of Taylor's sample in Newcastle were self-employed).¹¹³

A widely-held assumption is that many Asians run shops and that this is a major area into which they appear to be moving. However, only 8% of Asian men nationally are self-employed compared to 12% of whites. Further, only 5% of Asians run shops.¹¹⁴ In Allen et al's sample only

6% of the Asians either ran or were employed in Asian concerns.¹¹⁵

In general Asians are not becoming entrepreneurs on a large scale although they have in some areas taken advantage of local conditions.¹¹⁶

The majority of the businesses either provide services to the local Asian community or are restaurants. Few of the businesses are industrial.

Much has been made of the claim that Asians find jobs mainly through informal networks of friends and relatives. One such case is the study by Brooks and Singh which seems to suggest that Asians are unique in using this method of finding jobs.¹¹⁷ This is a common practice, especially when there is a shortage of labour for labour can afford to move around. Smith found that this tendency was no stronger amongst Asians than it was amongst whites.¹¹⁸

Changes in Traditional Values

At first the intention of migrants was to return to their place of origin so they dropped many of their customs and values because what happened in Britain 'did not count'. However, once dependants arrived and the material ties in Britain became stronger the intention to return became a myth. The Ballards argue that this myth legitimises continued adherence to the values of their homeland and the condemnation of British cultural values. They believe that it has become "... the central charter for the maintenance of Sikh ethnicity in Britain".¹¹⁹

Fewer and fewer Asians think that they will return but those that do usually do not concern themselves with learning English or participating in the work situation or the local community. By concentrating on traditional customs and values they hide from the

realities of living in Britain and this also facilitates easy readjustment to the country of origin. This helps to explain the rigid application of traditional customs such as arranged marriages to their children for they are concerned about their standing in their place of origin.

Emigration was, till recently, regarded as a temporary move by Asians and observers alike. Asians may still talk of returning to their area of origin but most are unlikely to do so. The Ballards note that once izzat began to be gained and lost in Britain consolidation began to take place. Spending on clothes, etc. which was previously restricted to the villages began to take place on a much larger scale in the competition for status and prestige.¹²⁰

To explain the Sikhs' failure to return the Ballards cite the temptation to earn 'a little more' and the fear of disturbing their children's education.¹²¹ Those who have returned have found difficulties in establishing themselves due to their lack of contact with the political and economic network within which they must operate in their village or origin. Saifullah Khan notes that the lack of opportunities in Mirpur puts Pakistanis off returning.¹²² Though some of the old may return there is a tendency for the young to see themselves as 'here to stay'.¹²³

Asians are settling in Britain and changes are inevitably occurring in their communities in spite of the attempts by many of them to preserve traditional values and norms. The most obvious aspects of change are between youth and their elders. All aspects of Asian culture have been questioned by the youth and while some of it remains intact

and is seen as desirable other aspects do not appear to have a future in Britain. Before looking at changes, however, it is essential to examine the attempts to maintain the traditional culture once dependants began to arrive.

The loyalties and status acquisition of first generation Pakistani immigrants remained within the home frame of reference. Saifullah Khan believes that "... the main institutions of village life remain fundamental principles regulating daily life in Bradford".¹²⁴ Among the Bengalees in the East End of London food, clothes and politics have remained predominantly those of the village and there is a strong identification with Bengalee music, drama, poetry and songs.¹²⁵

In the 1960s Sikhs attempted to retain their traditional cultural values by expressing their culture overtly.¹²⁶ Sikh women wore the salwar kamiz and men began to grow their hair and beard again. Temple attendance became more frequent than in the Punjab. The Ballards suggest that this partly reflected a deepening interest in religion and more generally in the maintenance of the fundamental values of Sikh society. The turban, especially, was a public assertion of their pride in themselves.

Sikh traditions are viewed in terms of 'symbolic affirmation' according to James. So when they meet hostility their reaction is to affirm a distinct, symbolic feature of their way of life, for example, insisting on wearing a turban. James argues that at first only the sons of strict Sikhs had long hair but, by the early 1970s, due to hostility and discrimination from the wider society, the number was growing.¹²⁷

Beetham's study illustrates the extent to which some Sikhs will go to maintain their traditions. Even after final decisions were taken that Sikhs could not wear turbans instead of regulation bus caps the Sikhs continued to wear their turbans so as to be true to their convictions, and more importantly, as a public demonstration to Sikhs who had abandoned their religious symbols since coming to Britain.¹²⁸

Many Sikhs were worried that the basis of their religion would be undermined which constituted a moral threat to their children. At one stage of this dispute a Sikh threatened to burn himself alive if there was not a settlement. He said he was doing it as an act of religious faith on behalf of the 90% of Sikhs who did not wear the turban.¹²⁹ This dispute sparked off a revival for wearing Kesh among Sikhs in Britain in the late 1960s.¹³⁰

R. and C. Ballard argue that ethnic organisation is important in maintaining traditional values and norms. They argue that Sikhs are tightly bound up in Punjabi networks of hospitality and that their commitment to Punjabi social and moral values remains intense.¹³¹ The closeness of relationships within a small community is regarded as having the effect of enforcing continued allegiance to and participation in traditional culture.

This position is open to criticism for it only deal with relations within the community while external factors are extremely important but are not analysed.¹³² Saifullah Khan points out that: "Retention of traditional cultural values depends ... on pressure from the local Asian population and the degree of contact with the homeland".

However, for her this is only one aspect for: "External factors in the environment are ... critical determinants of so-called 'ethnic' patterns".¹³³

The system of arranged marriages has been used to try and maintain traditional values because it ensures that, amongst other things, the two people are of the same religion or caste. Accepting an arranged marriage is itself a bow to tradition for it is a contract between two families and not two individuals. James argues that girls from India were considered better marriage partners because Indian girls in Britain become 'westernised'. Wives have therefore been imported and as such are "... a very important conservative influence in the community, maintaining religious and social traditions and offset the 'Westernised' character of their British Sikh husbands".¹³⁴

Change has become associated with the development of British-born or British-educated second generation Asians.¹³⁵ Saifullah Khan argues that while amongst Pakistanis the highest value is placed on educating their children in Britain this also presents the most fundamental threat to all that is valued. Parents are often frightened that their adolescent daughters may do something to disgrace the family.¹³⁶

English is emphasised in schools and success in using it is rewarded. Asian languages are discouraged which may lead to them being regarded as inferior or a mark of ignorance. Many of the notions about Asians' cultures and religions may make Asian children feel that they have nothing to be proud of. To find a 'good job' often requires

a large degree of 'anglicisation' which may create friction between parents and children.¹³⁷

Children are usually more fluent in English than their parents and consequently often have to act as interpreters. This can reinforce elders' notions that they are being left out of decision taking. In general older Asians feel 'left out' because they are not so important as they would have been in Asia. Lack of English can therefore make the elder son very important at an early age compared to the traditional norm.¹³⁸ Saifullah Khan also found that the ability of the young to use the social skills of British society often upsets the traditional authority of the family.¹³⁹

It appears to be the case that the hierarchical and authoritarian structure of Asian families is being changed in Britain. Anwar argues that:

"Young Asians are clearly beginning to question traditions which parents would like to preserve".¹⁴⁰

Taylor found that:

"Just as most of the sons chose not to assert but to conceal unorthodox views and behaviour, so some of the parents turned a blind eye to their non-conformity, provided it was not too blatant".¹⁴¹

On some issues, however, strife does erupt. For example, young people may be sent to Asia or may leave their parents over an arranged marriage. Morrison believes that there is an increasing tendency for Asian youth to question the decisions taken by their parents.¹⁴² Masani sums up this conflict: "Second generation Asians are less influenced by their elders' traditional religious and cultural values; but they are not in revolt against them".¹⁴³

Real differences arise over how best to assert themselves against discrimination and racist attacks. Asian youth lack confidence in the older generation and feel that the community leaders neither understand nor represent them.¹⁴⁴ In Southall and the East End of London the traditional community leadership (mosque and temple leaders, businessmen and middle-class professionals) in the face of racist attacks tried to contain the militant demands of the youth so as to be able to talk to the police and politicians. However, they were swept aside by a massive upsurge of angry Asian youth.¹⁴⁵

Parekh believes that second generation Asians are critical of their parents' lack of fight and their orthodoxy and of the traditional community leadership.¹⁴⁶ He argues that this situation has arisen because first generation Asian immigrants compared themselves to people in Asia and so did not see their life-style as well below average. Second generation Asians however do not feel 'grateful' for their standards of reference are drawn from Britain and they demand equality. While they are marginally better off than their parents they feel discrimination much more acutely.¹⁴⁷

One path which young Asians might take in this situation is that already tread by young West Indians.¹⁴⁸ In Huddersfield Morrison found that although the gang syndrome was absent truancy, dishonesty and violence were on the increase on an individual basis.¹⁴⁹ In Wandsworth Asian youth were beginning to go about in gangs.¹⁵⁰ Asian girls appear to be causing their parents problems. Crishna points out that Asian girls do become pregnant before marriage and have to have abortions and that tensions within families are leading some girls to run away or to commit suicide.¹⁵¹ Wilson notes that in

some parts of Britain it has become endemic amongst Gujarati girls to run off with West Indians and English.¹⁵²

An alternative path is greater involvement with some of the institutions of the wider society. The reaction of Bengalee youth to racist attacks in London's East End brought them into contact with the labour movement and white anti-racists.¹⁵³ Community and Race Relations projects have been founded but Asian youth are largely sceptical of these.¹⁵⁴ At one meeting for Asian youth in the East End they participated from the floor and were critical of the attitude of the CRE.¹⁵⁵

On the whole Asian youth appear to accept their traditional culture though they are liberalising it and want their children to have more freedom than they did.¹⁵⁶ So, for example, they expect some say in the choice of marriage partner and they also intend to live their married lives differently from their parents. Saifullah Khan argues that: "The emergence of a socially and physically more mobile, British-orientated second generation points to a decrease in significance of the narrower ethnic categories".¹⁵⁷ The emphasis on caste and village ties appears to be giving way to an identification as Asians.

It is certainly the case that second generation Asians are less concerned with caste. Taylor found that young men were largely ignorant of their father's caste.¹⁵⁸ In Coventry caste divisions were not strong barriers to contact.¹⁵⁹ In South London there is inter-ethnic and inter-national contact.¹⁶⁰ Caste and ethnicity can become irrelevant in some situations, for example, the Grunwicks

picket or the demonstrations in Southall. In these cases people assert themselves as women, Asians or workers, not as Jats or Gujaratis.

In the late 1960s the growing laxity in religious practise was one of the reasons for the dispute over the right of Sikhs to wear turbans while on duty on the buses. Although religion is still fairly important the signs are that it is becoming less important for Asians in general though there are differences amongst different groups. Moslems have held on to their religion best probably because its practice is not dependent on the local context.¹⁶¹

Young Moslems are in general much better instructed than young Sikhs or Hindus. Evans found that only a third as many Indian sons as fathers and half as many Pakistani sons as fathers attended religious services regularly though very few Asians claimed to have no religion.¹⁶² Anwar argues that "... due to the lack of proper religious teaching, there is a trend towards a breakdown in religious observance within the Asian community as far as the second generation is concerned".¹⁶³

Although young Asians want (and are having) a greater say in their choice of marriage partner the principle remains the same. It is over the system of arranged marriages that conflicts between loyalty to the family and independence come to a head. Although Asians accepted arranged marriages in the past they are less willing to do so now. The experts whom Anwar interviewed believed the system would probably break down.¹⁶⁴

Taylor believes that:

"... in practise respect for parents, fear of being cast from the family and awareness of the ramifications of social disrepute - all combined to exert great pressure to conform even on the independent-minded minority".¹⁶⁵

However, although the majority of Asian youth still favour arranged marriages the figures are dropping all the time.¹⁶⁶ Marriages are becoming increasingly semi-arranged and this along with the difficulty in actually finding suitable partners suggests that the system will continue to become less and less rigid.

Because Asian women were seen as upholders of traditional values they were 'imported' to counterbalance the 'anglicisation' of Asian men brought up in Britain. Moslem women remained isolated from the outside world because of purdah and because they have had little time to pick up English. This situation is changing dramatically, even amongst Moslem women, because of the need for women to go out to work and because girls are gaining a high standard of education. Women are asserting themselves because they contribute money to the household and educated girls are less and less willing to simply become wives and mothers.¹⁶⁷ Consequently, the traditional roles associated with women are undergoing dramatic changes.

Section 3

Asians and Organisations

Saifullah Khan argued that: " The Pakistani population in Britain. both at the local and national levels, is fragmented with no 'grass-roots' organisations".¹⁶⁸ She believed that even if they were organised they would not make demands with any force because the first generation sought to remain unobtrusive. Taylor remarked that:

"The most notable thing, perhaps, about the Indian and Pakistani communities in Newcastle was the lack of formal organisations".¹⁶⁹

Taylor believes that because the Asians felt they were 'making it' on an individual level they did not need organisations to demand their rights. They were aware that their unpopularity was due to their success and they did not want to exacerbate this hostility. They wanted to quietly continue enjoying their prosperity.¹⁷⁰ This may have been true for the first generation who envisaged return or who were doing well materially.

Amongst Asian youth very few even think that they might return.¹⁷¹ British-born and educated Asians have closer ties to Britain than to Asia in many ways and Britain is seen by them as their home.¹⁷² It is not accidental that one of the chants of Asian youth is 'Come what may, we're here to stay'. If Asians are deciding not to return what must be examined is the organisations they are developing in Britain.

Religious Organisations

At first the growth of Asian communities was accompanied by a growth in interest in religion.¹⁷³ Large communities can afford to hold religious meetings and some temples and mosques have been established. Where these exist there must also exist committees to see to the running of day-to-day affairs.

However, it appears that there are many difficulties in establishing viable religious organisations. A large community is required to maintain a temple or mosque (i.e. to pay for the wages

of full-time organisers and for the building). There is also the problem of being able to find religious teachers and holy men and being able to afford to keep them. Due to these types of problems and a tendency to laxity in religious practice, especially among youth, doubt has to be cast over the future of religious organisation as it presently exists.

This does not mean that religion is totally devalued. Status can be gained by regularly attending religious meetings and by contributing money towards expenses. Maintaining religious traditions and practices may be valued and can help people achieve status but it is becoming more and more difficult for Asians to do so. In areas where religious organisations are active there will be competition for posts as these will hold status and prestige. These posts can be used as bases for building up a group of supporters for competition in other fields, for example, IWA (Indian Workers Association) politics.

It is certainly the case that religious leaders and organisations were important at least up till 1967. In the dispute over the wearing of turbans the support of local religious leaders was sought and was important in gaining support amongst local Sikhs.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, Pakistanis have traditionally looked to their local religious leaders for support and guidance in other disputes. Where they exist religious organisations are mobilised in defence of religion and other issues.

On the whole the importance of religious organisations appears to be dropping. Taylor found that although organisations concerned

with places of worship existed the attendance was poor.¹⁷⁵ In the circumstances Asians face today religious organisations have little to offer, especially to the youth. Interest in them appears to be falling away but this does not mean that religion will disappear. Moslems cling fairly strongly to their religion and Sikhs and Hindus still recognise their religion but it is less and less an organising principle in their lives.¹⁷⁶ Religious organisations exist and function but they are losing their importance to Asians the longer they live in Britain.

Trade Union Membership

Membership of trade unions is growing amongst Asians and this is partly due to the realisation that they will not be returning and thus an awareness that they must involve themselves in British organisations to advance their interests. This realisation along with increased knowledge of how best to achieve their aims has come to Asians the longer they have lived in Britain.

Membership of the trade unions is related to a number of factors. The most important is the size of the workplace.¹⁷⁷ Large factories are usually well organised and Asians, if asked, usually join the union. Smaller workplaces are less likely to be unionised and so Asians are not likely to be members. In some areas of Britain, (e.g. London's East End) industry is mainly concentrated in small workplaces. In this situation, where there is also a high concentration of Asians, unionisation is low. However, in areas with, for example, large textile factories, Asians will tend to be unionised.

When talking about the numbers of Asians involved in unions it

must be kept in mind that the situation differs all over the country depending on local factors. A study by the Runnymede Trust pointed out that Asians are overrepresented in sectors of industry where union organisation is low and also in workshops where few workers are employed.¹⁷⁸

Early Asian immigrants may have thought that there was little point in joining a union since they intended to return home. However, later immigrants were often sceptical about the benefit of trade unions and would only join if the workplace were a closed shop.¹⁷⁹ There was little confidence in the union defending them against discrimination. The racist attitudes of union officials also prevented Asians joining.

Many Asians who might have been willing to join a union have been put off by the attitude of the union. Apart from racism there are also assumptions that Asians will return home or that they are not interested anyway. Thus, many officials have not informed Asians about unions or asked them to join. As well as this many Asians have found themselves in situations where the white, skilled workers are unionised but no unions exist for the unskilled jobs which they fill.

For some Asians union involvement can jeopardise their stay in Britain. Ashtiany argues that:

"This seems to be specially true for the bulk of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers concentrated in under-unionised industries notably hotel and catering. The fact that these industries are under-unionised itself clearly adds to the problem".¹⁸⁰

On top of this the failure of unions to act decisively in support of Asian workers has added to the scepticism already present about the benefits of union membership.

Despite all this the tendency is for Asians to join unions. One of the reasons for this is a growing awareness amongst unions that Asians are an important part of the workforce and so must be unionised. In the East End of London the NUT & GW (National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers) have begun a recruiting drive amongst the Bengalees who mainly work in small back shops,¹⁸¹ Leaflets and pamphlets are beginning to be published in Asian languages in an effort to recruit members to trade unions.

As Asians began to realise that they would probably not return they became less tolerant of discrimination. They have begun to look for allies to help them improve their position at a time when there is a general and sometimes massive increase in union militancy. In this situation Asians, as workers "... looked to the trade union movement for support and chose traditional trade union methods of struggle".¹⁸²

It is also the case that Asians are not just concerned with racial discrimination or cultural needs. In Allen et al's study Pakistanis were concerned with working conditions much more than with cultural needs. This was even more the case with Indians for when they were asked why they joined the union about half of them mentioned the political objectives of the union.¹⁸³ Individual complaints about discrimination still occur but Asians are concerned much more with developing group solidarity and making group demands.

Cases have arisen of Asians acting as 'hirers' of labour and in return receiving 'gifts' or 'prestige'. This causes problems and friction amongst the local community. Asians who benefit from this

system oppose the introduction of a union because this sort of practice is frowned upon by union officials. Because it offers an alternative to the 'padrone' system some Asians will try to establish a union in a workplace. Thus, the organisation of a union can break down the bonds between workers and 'hirers' and create instead bonds of group solidarity.¹⁸⁴

Union organisation can become involved with the local community in other ways. IWAs were very important in helping to establish unions in factories and the ties and political alliances involved in IWA politics inevitably spilled over into the union organisation. This did not happen in every case but where it did it tended to create 'groupism' which is detrimental to solidarity amongst workers. It also places shop stewards in a bad position for they are there to represent all of the workers and not one faction above or against another.

When sections of a workforce have something in common, other than that they happen to work together, group cohesion can become much stronger. It can also affect the recruitment of workers to unions. In some foundries whole shops joined within weeks through secret union drives.¹⁸⁵ Allen and Smith believe that there is

"... potential use of ethnicity as a mobilising force in the absence of other resources, for highly effective trade union action, not in separate organisations, but within the British trade union movement".¹⁸⁶

The reaction of trade unions to Asians has had important repercussions on them and their willingness to participate in the organisation. There have been positive contributions in some areas such as recruiting drives, publicity in Asian languages, the setting-up of language classes and special sections for immigrants

such as the Catering Workers' Branch of the TGWU.¹⁸⁷ The TUC has called for the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act but it has not been very active for it is influenced by the Labour party and public opinion.

Within their own organisations and society at large unions have failed to work towards equality of opportunity. Only the militancy of Asian workers and local initiatives have pushed unions into action over questions about Asians. In fact it almost appears that unions have largely ignored Asian workers if at all possible. Asians are under-represented at every level of union leadership and there have been few attempts to tackle the problems of language difficulties.

Individuals can be extremely important in union organisations. A racist shop steward can put Asians off and destroy any chance of building a united workforce. Union officials can have an elitist view and be unconcerned with Asians since they are unskilled. Weak officials or weak unions may turn a blind eye to discrimination to avoid confrontation with management or their white members. Asians may be ignored until there is a threat of a strike and then the official may intervene to prevent it.

Because of the union's failure over disputes involving Asians, and Grunwicks in particular, Masani believes that Asians see unions as curbing rather than backing militancy.¹⁸⁸ On occasions unions have supported management against Asian workers and white workers against Asians.¹⁸⁹ It is these racist attitudes that have resulted in some workers organising themselves outside of the union because they did not feel that the union was assisting them.¹⁹⁰

In the face of disinterest and sometimes opposition Asians have participated as fully as they can in the union and have proved themselves to be militant when they take action. Many obstacles stand in the way of Asians participating in the union such as language differences, shift work and lack of union experience. The internal structures of unions often make them undemocratic. Pakistani workers in Allen et al's study, for example, felt that their industrial demands would be better pursued by a Pakistani representative because whites were hostile.¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, militant action has increased and few strikes are over racial discrimination.¹⁹² Bentley believes that the dispute at Imperial Typewriters may point to the future "... with coloured workers taking collective action to support a group demand rather than limiting action to the pursuit of a particular individual complaint".¹⁹³ Rimmer found that Asians would come out on strike quicker and more militantly in defence of their rights.¹⁹⁴

In his study he found that the most important strikes involving Asians were over discipline and workers' and shop stewards' rights. They also fought for more control over the allocation of work. Solidarity action was taken seriously and action over reinstatement was quite common.¹⁹⁵ Asians have been involved in two main types of dispute: wage struggles by low-paid (mainly service) workers; and struggles for basic rights, equal opportunity and 'dignity'.

Strikes involving Asians as the main protagonists have usually developed out of disputes over low pay or bonus payments. From this they have often developed into struggles for union recognition because they have realised that they stand a better chance of success if

they are backed by a national union. Grunwicks is a case in point: from a grievance over pay the strike developed into a struggle for union recognition and wages with 'dignity'.

Through their involvement in trade unions Asians have been pulled into political struggles also. Trade union activity is one way of raising political issues and most disputes inevitably take on a political character. However, the involvement of Asians in trade unions and British political organisations is only one aspect of the political organisations in Asian communities.

Asian Involvement in Politics

Opposition to racism has been focussed through Asian and British organisations. In the 1950s IWAs began to grow and they were concerned with racial discrimination, racial harmony and informing members and the general public about affairs in India. Although the IWAs still exist Asians have been drawn into other forms of political action.

Political awareness of and participation in elections is increasing according to Anwar.¹⁹⁶ In some cases Asian turn-out is higher than amongst non-Asians. In marginal seats in some areas their votes are very important and political parties have recognised this and have started using the Asian press to catch their votes. Asians stand for posts in local and general elections for various parties and membership of political parties is the same or slightly higher than for whites.¹⁹⁷

Through their awareness of the political situation in Britain

Asians do not follow the advice of their organisations as much as they used to. Unlike in 1964 Asians do not always vote Labour although the majority still do and they are still more likely to do so than whites.¹⁹⁸ Although issues in Britain are becoming more important issues related to the country of origin are still considered of interest, especially among the older generation.¹⁹⁹

Race relations was considered an important issue by Asians. So also was the provision of school facilities probably because Asians are a young population and more aware of the problems of dwindling facilities. There appears to be a general awareness of the issues facing Britain which affect everybody.²⁰⁰ The popularity of Labour was falling even though most Asians felt that they would be better off under a Labour government.

Asians have formed many political organisations of their own for specific reasons. The most common of these have been a reaction to racist violence, for example, Southall Youth Movement, Bangladesh Youth Front. Others have been formed over issues such as housing, for example, Bengalee Housing Action Group. Through anti-racist activity many Asians, especially youth, have become involved with white political parties and multi-racial groups such as the Anti-Nazi League.

It was probably the myth of return which led to a low level of interest in British politics amongst the first generation. During the 1960s IWAs worked to involve Asians in political issues in Britain; for example, IWAs actively campaigned against immigration laws. Asians have become more involved in inter-racial groups and committees

because of their increased exposure to and perception of racism.

Leaders of Asian groups and committees have contacts with political parties and the IWAs grilled potential candidates in elections and then advised the local Asian community how to vote. During the 1960s Asian leaders also made a move from their own organisations into inter-racial ones such as local CRCs and of course into local political parties. Leaders of Asian organisations have always had talks with MPs, police and councillors whenever problems arose.

Involvement in politics for most Asians has tended to be very sporadic. Racist attacks can spark off demonstrations, marches and meetings which die down soon after. Nevertheless, these political activities do bring Asians into the wider political scene and do establish contacts with them and other political groups and parties. They also involve large numbers of Asians rather than the leaders of various organisations.

More recently there appears to have been a change in attitude towards inter-racial organisations such as the CRC. While elders and the established leaders still talk to and sit upon these organisations the youth, while accepting money to help build up their own organisations, have often vociferously attacked these organisations.²⁰¹ The youth are also suspicious of all political parties even though they are involved with them and seek support from them for they often feel that they are 'being used'. Involvement in white organisations is not seen as essential to the youth. Instead they prefer to take the attitude of "We'll take care of it ourselves".

Indian Workers' Association

IWAs have proved to be the most successful Asian political organisations in Britain. Non-Punjabi Indians have had little to do with the IWAs and this has helped to develop their organisation for they are mainly composed of Sikhs from the Punjab and so have a common religion, culture and tradition. The first IWA was formed in Coventry in 1938 to work for the cause of Indian independence. When this was achieved in 1947 they declined but reappeared in the 1950s concerned with race relations in Britain and acting as an information service on India.²⁰²

One view of IWAs is that they are trying to help Asians to integrate. They encouraged their members to join trade unions, to vote and to become involved in local affairs. To demonstrate their intention to be part of the local community they became involved in activities such as collecting money for white workers on strike, donating money to local charities, appearing at local events and organising inter-racial football matches. More importantly they co-operated with many organisations over racial discrimination.

Within IWAs the elections for offices were the focus of political activity. In the run-up to elections factions were formed and it was not uncommon for 600-1,000 people to come to an IWA election meeting after a month's campaign. There was mass participation because of the tightly-knit structure of the community. People voted because 'leaders' of the factions asked them to and they often participated ~~ir~~ regardless of what they thought of the IWA.

John argues that "... practically all men who aspired to formal

positions of leadership within the Punjabi community joined in the competition for IWA office",²⁰³ which included religious leaders. In this way IWAs became symbols which united local Punjabi communities. Thus, IWA politics became similar to those of any small community : a blend of personal loyalty, enmity and political differences.

An important group within IWAs were the CP (Communist Party) members who always formed one of the factions in elections. The CP worked for unity amongst Punjabis and their programme was very mild so as not to offend people. CP branches grew rapidly taking in people who were not committed to CP politics but were only concerned with IWA politics. Unlike other groups the CP remained as a permanent faction within the IWAs.

Around 1968 IWA politics began to change profoundly due to a general change in political trends in Britain and the impact of living in Britain for a number of years on the Asian immigrants. John identifies four aspects to this: the communities were becoming permanent and composed of families; because Asians had lived in Britain for some years they did not need so much help from each other as they used to; the communities were becoming differentiated along caste, religious, class and educational lines; Asians were becoming increasingly aware of their low status in British society.²⁰⁴

It also became the case that with the increase in groups and factions alliances became difficult within IWAs. The world-wide split in the CP resulted in many IWAs permanently splitting. John believes that: "There are simply too many groups and too many irreconcilable enemies for everyone to find a place in two rival states".²⁰⁵ The involvement

of 'leaders' in inter-racial committees and British political parties also undermined the IWAs.

Although still in existence IWAs have suffered decline. They continue to actively campaign against racial discrimination but youth do not seem to be involved to a large extent. Part of the reason for this may be the factionalism which is of little importance to youth when they increasingly think in terms of themselves as Asians rather than a person from such-and-such a village. This, factionalism eventually undermined the organisation of IWAs.

Political Processes in Asian Communities

Instances of faction fighting are common amongst Asians. The basis for factions was often laid in Asia where a man might have been highly respected before he emigrated. Long-standing members of the migrant community in Britain who had helped new migrants find jobs or houses could also become faction leaders. Alternatively young men who helped others through a good command of English could rapidly draw supporters round themselves.

Disputes in Britain were usually over trivial matters and the only gain from winning a post was prestige. Personal rivalries rather than issues were the main source of conflict. The centre of attention was upon the 'leaders' and what they said and did. As for the rest of the community they voted on the day either from an obligation to one of the leaders or from an ilaga tie, but very rarely on the basis of a political decision.

For most of the time the leaders of Asian organisations met with

MPs, or had talks with councillors while the rank-and-file Asians were only called on to demonstrate every so often. Up till the 1970s the older generation were content to allow the middle-class professionals and religious leaders to act on their behalf. This situation has changed rapidly for the youth are not willing to accept the way their 'leaders' act. Instead they have taken direct action themselves and organised at a grass-roots level with a mass of people becoming involved.

In this respect there have been enormous changes in the political organisation of Asians in Britain. Conformity, unobtrusive^{ness} and quietism characterised most of the early disputes involving Asians. Beetham believes that the successful campaign to allow the wearing of turbans on buses was achieved by lobbying councillors, petitions, writing to papers and so winning over public opinion.²⁰⁶ The alternative which put opinion against the Sikhs was to go on demonstrations and to become involved in a militant campaign. The latter has been typical of recent disputes, without bringing public opinion against them.

Strikes involving Asians became more bitter in the 1970s and racism became a bigger problem. The traditional method of solving problems - the leaders talking to police and MPs - was increasingly demonstrated not to be working. During the 'skinhead' era of 1970 in London's East End mass meetings were held by a frightened Asian community. Nevertheless, the racist attacks continued while the leaders talked about the problem.²⁰⁷

When violence erupted in 1976 the youth swept aside the

traditional leadership and their methods of solving problems. From petitions and well-worded protests they moved to direct confrontation and violence. Self-defence groups were set up to protect the Asian communities.²⁰⁸ Their actions mobilised their own community and local trade unions and political parties. Their involvement with other political organisations was to gain support - they did not look at this involvement for gaining personal prestige.

The main features of changes in political processes amongst Asians are greater involvement in unions, political parties and other political organisations and increased militancy in making demands and fighting for them. Less importance is given to white inter-racial groups, talks with MPs and councillors and the police and more importance is given to building mass support amongst Asians on the basis of a demand or a cause. Links at a grass-roots level are being established with trade unions and local political groups while the middle-class, elderly community leaders have lost importance and have been replaced by younger men who are close to the people whom they represent.

Given that these are the changes in the economic, social and political processes what must now be established is why they have taken place. To give a satisfactory answer to that question requires something better than 'because of racial discrimination'. Instead, the answer lies in the economic, political and social changes which have occurred in Britain over the last twenty years.

CHAPTER 5

Capitalism and Class in Britain

Introduction

A Marxist explanation of the position and actions of Asians in Britain does not entail acceptance of an ideological or economic determinist position. The example of the debate over the entry of immigrants to Britain illustrates this point. A crude economic determinist position would hold that legislation controlling the entry of immigrants was introduced because the demand for labour had been met. This approach would therefore fail to appreciate that political factors were very important and that legislation was a response to the growing anti-immigration lobby in parliament and the country in general. Equally invalid would be an ideological explanation for it would hold that it was racism amongst white British people that was responsible for the introduction of legislation.

A Marxist position recognises that the underlying causes of migration to Britain were economic and that demand for labour was very important. But it then analyses the dialectical relationship between this set of demands and the political demands of curtailing immigration. Similarly, a Marxist position can take into account the political aspects of immigration such as why many Conservatives at first opposed controls, not to benefit blacks, but because it implied the end of the Empire.¹ However, these factors must be related to a material base.

The problem which this chapter examines is the link between changes in the environment and changes amongst Asians. Change arises from specific circumstances and factors and these must be

established to gain an understanding of why changes occurred and what the implications are. Crucially, a Marxist position recognises that people make their own lives but the circumstances in which they do so are not of their own making.

Underlying the changes amongst Asians are factors in the environment which influence all aspects of Asians' lives in Britain. How Asians react in this situation depends on the Asians themselves, their culture and customs. Without an initial understanding of the environment, however, the Asians' reaction will appear internal to themselves and removed from external factors which obscures the way in which Asians are being affected by living here.

What must be established first is the general economic, political and social trends over the last twenty years and the general implications these have for Asians. It is then possible to explain specific changes amongst Asians such as changes in the role of women. Lastly, the specific relation between Asians and the class structure of Britain can be examined and the way in which Asians are adopting working-class attitudes, norms, etc can be discussed.

Section I

From Boom to Slump

Mass immigration to Britain from Asia took place when the British economy was enjoying its longest boom in the twentieth century. There was a demand for labour which could not be satisfied by the sources available in Europe. Because small nuclei Asian settlements existed in Britain, Asian migration was easily facilitated. Thus, the demand for labour in Britain and the

opportunities offered to Asians provided the basis for mass migration from Asia to Britain.

Asians were encouraged to come to Britain as it was possible for an Asian worker to speak for other Asians. In many industries there was an acute shortage of labour which Asians filled. The boom in the economy affected industries in different ways; some changed their methods of production to produce greater profits² while others required more skilled workers and had to train people for the jobs.

In general the boom created the opportunity for white British workers to move into the better sectors of industry: better pay, conditions, fringe benefits, etc. The declining sectors which could not afford high wages suffered greatly from shortages of labour, so for example without the influx of Asians Britain's textile industry would have collapsed some years ago. In other industries, such as foundries, few white British workers could be found to do the heavy, dirty, unskilled jobs and again Asians filled the gaps.

Thus, the consequence of an expanding economy was to put workers in a powerful bargaining position. They could afford to move around confident that they could always find a job with relatively good money. Apart from low unemployment the expanding economy also allowed the social services, established after the war, to grow and become an accepted aspect of British society.

During this period it appeared that standards of living would continue to rise. These conditions led to a downturn in industrial

conflict for workers' standards of living were improving. There was plenty of work available and services were beginning to meet the demands put upon them. In this situation few people were concerned about the presence of Asians in Britain for they did not represent a threat to the existing jobs and services.

In terms of material conditions then there was no reason to bring in legislation reducing the number of Asians and West Indian immigrants to Britain. However, the anti-immigration lobby in parliament began to grow and people's fears were played upon to create conditions in which legislation could be introduced. After the Conservatives won the general election in 1959 with a large majority the anti-immigration lobby gained momentum.

Osborne, the leader of the lobby, spoke out against the 'appalling flood' of immigrants in 1960 when there was a high level of immigration.³ The figures for the first nine months of 1961 were more than double those for the peak year of 1960 mainly due to the constant suggestions of control. Also, just as immigration in 1959 had been too low to meet the demands of industry so the figures were too high in 1961 as the boom petered out.⁴

In parliament and outside of it individuals and groups (such as the Birmingham Immigration Control Association) kept immigration alive as a political issue. In 1961 the Conservatives' fortunes were waning and they began to clamour for anti-immigration legislation.⁵ Immigrants were needed as workers but nevertheless the Conservatives were stampeded into introducing laws to 'keep the foreigner out'.⁶

Immigration created problems at a local level but this was nothing to do with the immigrants themselves. Between 1951-61 the Conservatives did nothing about the problems of housing, language and education and so bitterness, resentment and racialism could build up. They yielded to the anti-immigration lobby and Foot argues that in so doing they "... gave full credence to the slander of their extremists, who blamed the immigrant himself for the social problems resulting from Government neglect."⁷

Fear of losing votes in fact drove both Labour and Conservative towards an anti-immigration stand. The more alien the immigrants' religion, appearance or culture the more anxious they were to exclude them. The chauvinist, xenophobic element in people had assumed control over politicians and was believed to be 'public opinion' which had to be courted. By playing on the elements of chauvinism and xenophobia race relations and immigration became (and still are) a political issue which both parties have exploited.⁸

This introduction of politics seriously disrupted the pattern of immigration. Many people migrated to Britain in case they would lose their opportunity to do so and then after the Act was introduced immigration almost completely fell away.⁹ Restrictions on immigration changed the intentions of migrants from returning to Asia after a temporary stay to a more permanent stay in Britain. Once access between Britain and Asia was restricted Asians could only gain from migration by staying in Britain for a long time and bringing over their dependants. Asians might have settled in Britain anyway but the controls put on immigration ensured that this was so.

During the late 1950s there were reports of fights between coloured workers and whites. There was a colour bar in some pubs and there was antagonism and trouble in some workplaces. However, these were exceptions for the overall reaction was friendly and hospitable.¹⁰ The racist minority was not and is still not representative of 'public opinion'. Nevertheless, the identification of Asians as a 'problem' and the use of racism to whip up support have had an important impact on Asians living in Britain.

This sort of treatment is not unusual for immigrants coming to Britain. Many immigration acts have been passed in Britain and many immigrants have been attacked, discriminated against and abused.¹¹ Legislation against Asian immigrants cast them as an alien horde swamping Britain's culture. They have also been identified as causing housing problems, sponging off the welfare state and holding back white children at school. These images have all portrayed Asian immigrants in a negative light so it is not surprising that they have been treated with suspicion.

After almost completely halting Asian immigration in 1962 there was a lapse in the anti-immigration lobby. However, for most racials even one Asian or black person in Britain is too many and the campaign against immigration has continued. Only a trickle of dependants are allowed to enter Britain every year at the present and the current waiting time for entry is some two years. Tightening up control has mainly resulted in harsher conditions for immigrants.

Illegal immigration became a national obsession with the press

and a special unit of the police (the Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit) was set up to deal with the 'problem'.¹²

The picture presented by the media is far out of proportion to the actual existing situation but from time to time there is useful political capital to be made out of this issue. Thus, the possibility of immigration of large numbers of Asians from Kenya in 1968 provided an excuse to 'tighten up' some loopholes in the Commonwealth Immigration Act thereby distinguishing 'patrials' from 'non-patrials'.¹³

Since the introduction of immigration acts Asians have been almost consistently posed as a threat to British society.¹⁴ When dependants began to arrive in increasing numbers during the 1960s and Asian women and children became visible panic was spread of an Asian population explosion or Asians taking over schools. It became a widespread belief that the shortages of houses was due to Asian families going to the top of council housing lists.¹⁵ Different governments, by legislating on immigration control, created the image that there were too many Asians in Britain and that this was putting an intolerable strain on the social services.

All this was untrue but even so it created the atmosphere for a vicious anti-immigration campaign in the 1970s. Underlying this campaign was the decline of the British economy. Growth had slowed down during the '60s and by the '70s there was a definite decline. Unemployment began to rise and by 1976 there were a million and a half unemployed. Coupled with high unemployment were falling living standards and cuts in public services.

Immigrants became scapegoats for the failure of the capitalist

system. This was not simply a result of capitalists using racism to hide the reasons for the social problems which people faced. The belief that things might not be as bad as they actually were if immigrants were not here began to gain a grip. The argument is simple to get across and very attractive to people; a certain group of people who don't belong here anyway are taking jobs and houses so if they weren't here there would be jobs and houses for everybody.

This argument was taken up by many politicians and the press and so inevitably gained some credence amongst the general public. On this basis racist and fascist parties began to grow and individual attacks on Asians became increasingly common and in some areas almost endemic. During the 1970s Asians were set up as targets for the racists and chauvinists by political parties as they tried to outdo each other over who was 'toughest' over the immigrant issue. The popular press became hysterical in its attitude to immigrants in Britain at times and was responsible for generating ill-feeling towards them.¹⁶

It was no accident that the political parties failed to defend the rights of Asians or even openly attacked their presence in Britain. Industrial unrest of a scale not seen for decades along with rising unemployment and falling living standards was creating conditions which could lead to opposition to the existing policies and/or opposition to a racial minority. It was not surprising the latter sometimes occurred due to the atmosphere current at the time and the direct intervention of some politicians and political parties.

. The general decline in living standards over the past ten

years increasingly brought Asians and white British workers into competition for jobs, houses and other social services. When there is a shortage of something it is easier to blame the other people competing for it rather than to find out why the shortage is occurring. This does not mean that Asians and whites were in actual direct competition for specific jobs or houses. Rather, white British workers who were made unemployed saw Asians still going to work and so found it easy to believe that it was Asians, and not the effects of the recession, which were taking jobs away from white British workers.

A similar situation could occur with housing and other services. Asians and white British workers are generally looking for different types of housing but if the latter encounter difficulties it is easy to presume that Asians are getting houses before them, especially taking into account the stories in the popular press.¹⁷ The press must also take the blame for the myth that Asians came to Britain to enjoy the benefits of the NHS and the education system while giving nothing in return.

Asians were not responsible for these problems and in fact they suffered the worst effects of them. When Asians first came to Britain they could find jobs with little difficulty even though they were the jobs which whites had moved out of. By working shifts or overtime they could earn a comparable wage to white British workers. Low unemployment meant that there was little competition for available jobs and that in general enough work was available to provide a fairly ^{high} standard of living.

As the economy began to decline Asians were amongst the first

to feel its effects. Declining industries began to cut back on production thus reducing overtime and the possibility of earning high wages.¹⁸ As this process continued workers were made redundant usually on the basis of 'last in, first out' which affected Asians first. Further, unemployed white British workers unable to find a job started to look for any job which increased the competition for all jobs.

During a recession workers' living standards fall and this usually affects those in low-paid jobs hardest of all. For Asians this meant less chance of being able to save money to return with or even to send home. Saving up and buying a business in Britain became impossible for most Asians. It also became more difficult to improve their houses or to buy new ones. Thus, falling living standards restricted the opportunities of Asians to materially better themselves.

Unemployment is beginning to hit Asian workers very hard because they work in the least secure industries, because of their late recruitment to the labour market and because of the low positions they usually fill. As the economic slump continues there is little hope that their situation will improve. This situation stands in sharp contrast to the conditions in Britain when most of them first migrated here. Just living in Britain is becoming an increasing struggle for all low-paid workers and for Asians who may be trying to maintain their social obligations the task must be very difficult.

High unemployment amongst adults is accompanied by very high unemployment amongst youth. In a recession fewer youths are taken

on because positions are 'frozen', few apprenticeships are offered and unskilled jobs are given to men. Further, when there are fewer vacancies youth rely on someone, like their father, speaking for them. Asians are not well positioned to do this and on top of this there may also be racial discrimination against them.

For youth, unlike their parents, their experience of work may be unemployment and sporadic unskilled jobs. Their parents may be 'grateful' to be able to hang on to any job but youth are resentful and frustrated that there are limited opportunities for them. Because there are fewer apprenticeships available many youth will almost certainly remain unskilled manual workers all their lives.

Consequently, their pattern of life will be markedly different from their parents. Their standard of living once they find a job will be comparatively lower than their parents was when they first migrated to Britain. Forecasters predict a high level of unemployment as a permanent feature of British society so Asian youth will have more difficulties finding a job than their parents did.

Having found a job the possibilities of Asian youth setting up a business will be very unlikely. At first some Asians could do so after working and saving very hard but the second generation will find it almost impossible, especially as there is less demand for goods and services during a recession. Most Asians are house owners and this was made possible because of the relatively high standard of living they enjoyed when they first migrated to Britain and the availability of cheap houses suited to their needs.

House ownership amongst the second generation will probably decline and will continue to decline in the long term.¹⁹ Low living standards are restricting Asians' opportunities to buy houses and this is compounded by the housing situation in Britain. Many of the areas into which Asians first moved are slum areas and are either in the process of being demolished or are on the list to be. The type of housing favoured by Asians is thus becoming more and more difficult to find. Further, house prices have risen dramatically in Britain over the past decade so the possibility of buying a house is becoming less and less feasible.

For many of the second generation and for subsequent generations of Asians this means that they will have to apply for council housing. This will bring them into greater contact with the white British working class and will also make the maintenance of joint/extended families much more difficult. Not only are council houses not usually large enough for this type of family organisation but they also come vacant very sporadically. It will be less easy for Asians to move into areas as large groups and to be close enough to maintain the degree of contact that they do at the present.²⁰

Asian migrants satisfied many of their ambitions after coming to Britain. Earnings were very high compared to those in Asia and they could afford to raise their families' living standards fairly high. Although they later became aware of the relatively low position they occupied in Britain their reference point was Asia and they believed that they had bettered themselves.

Compared to their parents the youth are very frustrated, Having

been brought up in Britain they do not have a rural background to compare themselves to. Their standards have been set in Britain and by them they are not doing very well. In the current recession there are few opportunities for Asian youth to better their position. This, along with discrimination, can cause a lot of resentment and anger and Asian youth, unlike their parents, are less willing to take low positions, bad conditions and poor pay.²¹

As well as materially affecting Asian youth the recession can be expected to have a long-term impact on their consciousness and the way in which they view life. Compared to the British working class first generation Asians' aspirations were much higher in terms of jobs, houses, establishing business and life chances in general.²² As awareness developed that this was becoming less possible they recognised that their aspirations were unrealistic and they became much closer to the white British working class in terms of what they they thought they could achieve.²³

This process can already be seen to be developing. The failure to find good jobs has created despondency amongst Asian youth and this is becoming evident in the development of truancy, the questioning of parental authority and the gang syndrome.²⁴ The myth of return does not exist for Asian youth and they are concerned with trying to find a good job in Britain and their aspirations have become similar to those of white British working-class youth.²⁵

The economic slump has also had important material effects on Asian women. Due to the drop in earning power of Asian men, their wives have begun to take employment.²⁶ They now contribute in a

more direct fashion to the family economically and their wages have become an important part of the family income. Consequently, there have been changes in Asian women's roles.

Working outside the home should involve a loss of izzat but this is not happening for the majority of Asian women are having to take jobs to earn extra money.²⁷ Even amongst Pakistanis the increasing tendency is for women to take work outside the home.²⁸ As might be expected women mainly tend to work with all-female workforces for unskilled women usually have to take jobs on production lines.²⁹

Although their jobs are important for the family income Asian women often have to work long hours in poor conditions for low pay. Because of their lack of skills and often poor English they have been easily exploited by small firms such as Grunwicks or Fitters and small sweat-shops. Asian women are thus restricted to the jobs with low pay and because many of them do not know their rights or do not want trouble at work they often put up with these conditions.

As Asian women have become used to working in Britain this pattern is beginning to change. They increasingly tend to think of themselves as workers and compare their pay and conditions to other workers.³⁰ Along with this attitude has come an increased willingness to demand and fight for their rights. Asian women's struggles have often been for basic demands much as the right to form a union or for 'dignity' at work because of the type of workplace they usually find jobs in. In the course of their struggles they have sought the support of other workers and the wider trade union movement.³¹

Asian women are increasingly likely to be drawn into struggles for better conditions and pay because in a recession the types of factories in which they work will find it difficult to compete and will attempt to exploit the workers to a greater extent. Asian women need the money so they cannot afford to leave and instead will have to fight back which will increase their view of themselves as workers.

Through greater participation in the wider environment, going to work and meeting other workers Asian women's attitudes are beginning to change.³² They now contribute directly to the family income and are therefore demanding a greater say in the family affairs. For young Asian women it is possible to be financially independent of their husbands or family which may not be desirable for Asian women but is now at least a possibility when it was not before.³³

Male dominance and authority does not necessarily go unchallenged now and Asian women feel that they should have as much say in arguments as their men. If the woman works the man is not dominant financially and consequently is less likely to dominate decision-taking.³⁴ Going out to work, therefore, has made Asian women more aware of themselves as individuals and less likely to accept their traditional roles; through the experience of work they are beginning to challenge these notions.

As well as affecting Asians the decline in Britain's economy has changed the environment for during the 1970s there was a rise in membership of racist and fascist parties and a growth in the level of racism.³⁵ When Asians first came to Britain it was only extreme

racists who called for repatriation whereas now members of the National Front regularly do so while Conservative MPs hint at such an idea and local Conservative councillors attempt to repatriate immigrants rather than house them.³⁶

There is a more hostile environment towards Asians. Although the state and capitalism do not always deliberately propagate racism, it serves to direct people's attention away from the real cause of the economic crisis. The state only steps in when a real crisis has loomed but otherwise allows and fosters racism.³⁷ Similarly, capitalists and employers are prepared to allow myths to develop about immigrants and will in some cases provoke resentment towards them.³⁸

Racist and fascist parties have been responsible for pushing people towards racism. If it had not been for the efforts of some fringe political groups their propaganda would barely have been countered. Moreover, the state has defended their 'right' to spread lies about immigrants and to deliberately intimidate the immigrant population.³⁹ Bodies such as the CRE have been set up by the state to challenge racism but these have proved ineffective and few immigrants feel it is worthwhile to use their limited powers.

During a period of decline racist and fascist parties can grow because they have an easy solution to the problems of falling wages, unemployment, crime and bad housing; 'send blacks home'. It is easy for people to believe that blacks should not be here and that without them everything would be alright. The state and capitalism are thereby let off the hook and so it is not surprising that they do not mind the existence of racism and will to an extent encourage it.

Political parties have used the questions of race relations and immigration to catch votes and this has also lent credence to the politics of racist and fascist parties. When the leader of the Conservatives spoke about Britain's culture being 'swamped' she lent considerable support to racists everywhere for here was the leader of one of Britain's two major parties publicly admitting that there were too many blacks and that they threatened the British way of life.⁴⁰

Governments therefore lend support to racist and fascist parties by continuing to talk about ways of tightening up immigration. This suggests that there are too many immigrants and that there are hordes waiting to enter, illegal or otherwise. Thus, the politics of parties such as the National Front appear similar to those of the major parties with the only difference being that the National Front do not mince their words.

Neither capitalism nor the state can take positive measures to prevent the conditions suited for the growth of racism and fascism. Economic recessions are an inevitable feature of the capitalist system and consequently so are unemployment, falling living standards, etc.. To change this would require a change of economic system and no capitalist would welcome that. Since they are unwilling to change the system they must exploit everything that helps to maintain it and in periods of recession one of these is racism.

During an economic recession racist and fascist parties can exploit the problems facing workers and can cause a rise in the level of racism directed at immigrants. The state allows this to happen

but without the stories in the press to whip up racism it would have been more difficult for racist and fascist parties to push their politics. Through wild stories and misleading reports the popular press can create fear, resentment and anger amongst people.⁴¹ As well as this it has lent credence to racist and fascist parties by portraying them as groups of misguided individuals.⁴²

It is not surprising that the press should act in this way. During the 1930s when fascism was becoming an important political force in Britain the Dail Mail openly supported fascism and urged its readers to join the fascist party. Then, as now, every British national newspaper is either directly, or through its major shareholders, linked to other big businesses, inextricably enmeshed in the capitalist system.

There is no 'free press' for it is not an independent institution. Those who have ultimate control over what is printed are drawn from the capitalist class. So, in general, what is printed tends to support their interests. All papers have an editorial line which reflects the owners' attitudes so reporters, sub-editors and editors write and publish only the material which is in line with it. Thus, the British press is constantly adapting to the needs of the British ruling class.⁴³

In a similar way the police have been used to lend support to the belief that immigrants are criminals. 'Sus' laws are mainly used against West Indian youth and this suggests to the public that many of them are likely to be criminals and mugging has been closely linked with them even though this has no basis in fact.⁴⁴ The hunt

for illegal immigrants has come to suggest that all Asians might be illegal immigrants or should not be here. The high level of racism in Britain is used to justify the harsh treatment handed out by police to immigrants.

Over the last twenty years the single, most important factor which has influenced Asians has been the economic recession. It has directly affected Asians and certain aspects of their life and it has also brought Asians and white British workers into closer competition for basic amenities. They have been maligned in the press, the processes of law and order seem to operate differently for them than for white British workers and they face the threat of physical attacks.

When Asians first came to Britain they filled essential gaps in the domestic labour market which white British workers had moved out of. Housing, suited to their needs, was available and was cheap. With jobs and houses available and a high standard of living Britain appeared a suitable place to live for quite a while, if not to settle in. It appeared possible to keep a family in traditional style and to maintain the customs and culture of the country of origin and to raise the family izzat.

This situation changed dramatically as the recession deepened. Asians, like other workers in Britain, were affected materially by high unemployment and a drop in living standards. Changes in the organisation of their families and in their traditional roles, customs and culture were forced upon them either directly through the effects of the recession or indirectly through the hostile environment which has been created in Britain towards Asians. In the next section these changes are examined in more detail.

Section II

Changes in Asian Culture

Many of the important changes which have occurred amongst Asians are due simply to being separated from their country of origin. This has made them act in different ways and made certain cultural practices very difficult to perform. Other changes have been seen as undesirable by them but nevertheless they have taken place because of the force of circumstances.

The joint/extended family has been difficult to organise because the type of housing available in Britain is not on the whole suited to this type of family. Without older relatives it is not altogether necessary anyway. Most households include the nuclear family and some other kin but there is a tendency towards nuclear-based family organisation. Having been brought up in this type of household young Asians increasingly wish to live in a nuclear household when they marry.⁴⁵ The limited availability of housing suitable for joint/extended families and consequently the increased reliance on council housing will make it very difficult for Asians who wish to maintain the joint/extended family to do so.

Older relatives have not tended to come to Britain and consequently family organisation and the hierarchy of authority has changed. Younger people and women have much more say in the running of family affairs than they would have had in Asia and they can also contribute more financially. Further, the experience of living in Britain is important for Asian youth believe that white British parents are not as strict as their own.

Broken down into smaller family groups it is not possible for

all Asian parents to be as strict as their parents and relatives were with them. In Asia children would have seen their parents being obedient and respectful towards their grandparents and elders. In Britain the notions of authority and obedience have remained the same as they were in Asia but there is not a working model for children to experience and this along with an awareness of how white British youth act is making the traditional notions difficult to maintain.

For the Asian migrants who first came to Britain village and friendship ties were as important as family ones. These ties were important for the older generation in helping them to settle and for friendships after they had settled. Politically, these ties are losing their importance because of the different political structure in Britain. There are few repercussions for failing to support a political tie or alliance which will damage the family, except perhaps socially.⁴⁶

Asian youth do not face these types of problem and consequently have no use for these ties. Instead, they develop friendships in the same way as white British youth do. They do not have loyalties to villages for they have probably never been there or if so, probably only on a visit. Unlike their parents they are more likely to identify themselves with Asia and not a specific village.⁴⁷ Further, racism has made them develop a wide base on which to defend themselves.

Political ties which originated in villages in Asia hold no relevance for youth. Apart from the loss of ties due to the migration process the British political system has come to have much

more importance for Asians. The issues involved in British politics are different from those in villages in Asia and require different methods of organisation. In Britain Asians vote in general and local elections and make up their own minds on who to vote for.⁴⁸

Asians are standing as candidates in British elections and as such must present the political programme of the party whom they represent.⁴⁹ They are standing on a political programme and Asians vote on this basis. Differences in political persuasion exist amongst Asians and this can not be simply attributed to the influence of 'leaders' in the communities. There is not a material basis for this type of action and more importantly this form of political action has been challenged by Asians.

The system whereby leaders mobilise support for themselves through village and caste ties has been by-passed and ignored by both young and old Asians on several occasions. Over small, unimportant issues Asians may be prepared to vote in a certain manner because of their allegiances but this is not so with major political decisions. Asians are deciding for themselves where their best interests lie even if this means going against their 'leaders'. Amongst the youth there is disrespect for traditional Asian leaders so the importance of caste and village ties will continue to decline.⁵⁰

Conflict arises between youth and their parents over the choice of marriage partner for parents are still concerned to see their children married off in the traditional manner. In Asia the system of arranged marriages is an important way for families to raise their

status. Great attention is paid to caste, village of origin, wealth and status for it is very important in the eyes of the village to marry people correctly.

In Britain this situation is becoming very difficult to achieve because of the nature of the migration process; chain migration has restricted the number of possibilities of marriage partners open to Asians and consequently they are becoming less suited in a traditional sense.⁵¹ Further, there is a lot less to gain from finding a well-suited marriage partner. For most Asians it is unlikely to increase their wealth although it may demonstrate adherence to traditional beliefs and in this way bring prestige.

Given the difficulties involved and the lack of real gains it might be considered surprising that Asians persist with this system. However, arranged marriages embody many aspects of Asian culture: obedience to parental authority; the importance of links established between groups; and moral codes. They have therefore become the most important test of how well parents have brought their children up.

Over this issue parents are prepared to enforce their authority for if they fail, they will, in the eyes of other Asians, have helped the process of the break-down of Asian culture. Parents feel that they have failed in their duties to educate their children socially, religiously or morally if they cannot enforce their authority over this issue. First generation Asians have a separate identity which they are proud of and which they wish to maintain. Arranged marriages have become the crucial test for whether this is possible.

Asian youth are well aware of their parents' beliefs and feelings and they wish to maintain their identity as Asians even though they may personally disagree with arranged marriages. It is one way in which they can prove to their parents that they are proud of their heritage and that they are obedient and respectful to their parents. Asian youth are also well aware of the consequence of refusing an arranged marriage.

For their parents it will mean that they are ostracised from the community and that their family will lose prestige. This means a loss of social contacts which would be very painful, especially for the parents. In the case of the youth concerned s/he may have to leave the family to save it from total disgrace. For these reasons young people may accept an arranged marriage. In spite of this sort of pressure however there are signs that this system is beginning to break down.

Most Asians are demanding some say in the matter even if it is only to see a photograph of the proposed partner. Many ask to meet the person and exert a degree of choice in the matter and some are simply ignoring their parents' wishes. Even those Asians who are willing to accept an arranged marriage are often only doing so to please their parents and do not intend to treat their children in this matter.

The system of arranged marriages is becoming more and more difficult to justify for it is not possible to always find suitable marriage partners. If the purpose is to establish links between groups and to raise families' status then this is not really happening in Britain.⁵² Young Asians are aware of this and so it is very likely

that the tendency to question the system will grow. Apart from fulfilling their parents' wishes the arranged marriage system has little to offer them.

In Britain the emphasis is on individuals choosing a partner on the basis of love. Young Asians do find this notion attractive and in Britain there is a greater possibility of it being fulfilled.⁵³ There is not the extended/joint family to back up this system in Britain nor the weight of social norms that exist in Asia. Many customs and religious practices have declined and it is difficult for parents to bring their children up in traditional beliefs. The lack of general social pressures makes it that much more difficult for parents to enforce their decisions and that much more easy for youth to refuse.

Religion has lost its importance because it is difficult to practise it in Britain.⁵⁴ Buying and maintaining temples and mosques is a costly business especially when people's living standards are falling. Apart from this material difficulty there has been a drop in the level of interest in religion for it is out of touch with the problems of living in Britain. The religious beliefs of Asians are appropriate for the social conditions in Asia but are inappropriate in Britain.⁵⁵

Festivals, obligations, ceremonies and rituals are tied in with the social structure of Asian society. They regulate and order social action and are an important aspect of day-to-day life. This is not possible in Britain for the whole society is organised differently. Asians work in a different manner from the one they

are accustomed to and must observe different rules and norms. It is difficult to follow religion strictly and there is not the same social pressure to conform to religious faith and practice. Conformity to religious orthodoxy may be approved of and lauded but for the majority of Asians, especially the youth, it is becoming less and less possible.

Many aspects of Asian culture and many customs have been dropped or changed since Asians migrated to Britain. This includes clothes, moral attitudes, eating habits, attitudes to parents and family and notions about roles and relationships.⁵⁶ Underlying these changes are the effects of the migration process and the changes in material conditions in Britain from Asia.

Migration was initially a temporary move with the central aim being to raise the status of the family in Asia and to return to appreciate the higher standard of living which working in Britain had created. In this situation men were cut off from their social ties but this was only temporary and the frame of reference was not how well a person was doing in Britain but how well the family was doing in Asia.

Effectively, links with Asia were very strong although it was virtually impossible to maintain traditional customs in Britain. As long as migrants' families remained in Asia migrants did not sink material roots in Britain. Once dependants began to come to Britain migrants bought houses for their families and sent their children to school thus establishing material ties in Britain.

After this step was taken migrants began to lose touch with

their families in Asia.⁵⁷ Economically, it became impossible to send home as much money as before due to the cost of supporting a family and social obligations in Britain.⁵⁸ Asians are often amongst the lowest paid and usually have large families which puts a great strain on their earnings.

It was believed that women would act as a stabilising force and would maintain the traditional values, beliefs and norms. Migrant communities were expected to resemble small villages with close links to Asia which would eventually return there. However, the arrival of dependants was responsible for the loss of social and cultural links.

Social obligations in Britain began to assume greater importance than the links with families in Asia with the development of migrants' families and friendships here. There was more freedom for Asians in Britain and less pressure on them to conform because older parents remained in Asia and the housing situation allowed them to live more individual lives. They had to adjust in some ways to live in Britain and this acted as a precedent for further changes.

The effects of the recession were very important in determining changes in Asians' culture and customs. Falling standards of living restricted the type of housing available and effectively prevented the establishment of the joint/extended family to any large extent. For the same reason women had to go out to work which runs against Asian norms and values. Asian women could no longer really represent the protector of traditions and in fact became innovators of change.

As the Asian communities in Britain developed in this way they began to grow apart from those in Asia for in Britain radical changes were occurring within a small period of time. Both the older generation and youth were forced to make changes because of the material circumstances in Britain. Asian youth especially were brought into very close contact with British society and its norms and values and some of these were adapted by them.

Having been brought up in Britain Asian youth were usually fluent in English and were much more aware of social conditions in Britain.⁵⁹ At school they came into close contact with white British youth and other immigrant youth such as West Indians. This has had an important effect upon their attitudes and beliefs for in general they hold views much closer to those of white British youth.⁶⁰ They have become very aware of what is happening in Britain, of their rights and how best to achieve them.⁶¹

Asian youth are therefore not orientated to villages in Asia. They have been educated and brought up in Britain and tend to feel that this is their home so they are concerned to establish themselves here. Unlike their parents they do not have attachments to villages in Asia nor have they had much contact with their larger families there. They have not experienced living in Asia and the norms and values would seem oppressive to them having lived in Britain. Thus, as the migration process has developed the links between Asians in Britain and at home become weaker and of less importance. Change amongst Asians has therefore been brought about directly and indirectly by changes in the environment in Britain.

It seems likely that large numbers of dependants came to Britain because of the 1962 act. This act introduced a voucher system which would have made it very difficult for Asians to return to Britain after having gone back to Asia and it virtually prevented any new immigration from Asia. Because of this there was a rush to 'beat the ban' and for a period up to when the act was introduced there was mass migration.⁶²

Having found jobs in Britain immigrants had to stay as long as possible to benefit from migrating since it was no longer possible to work for a few years, return to Asia, and then migrate to Britain again. A long stay in Britain with no contact with their families and living in all-male households must have been an off-putting idea to most migrants for they began to send for their dependants.

This extended the period of stay in Britain necessary to earn enough money to raise the family's status in Asia. By attempting to support two families the man's wage began to be stretched and as living standards declined this became an impossible task. For the Asians in Britain the important task was to support the immediate family.

It is unlikely that Asians living in Britain will return though some may do so when they reach retirement age.⁶³ Unless they were very lucky they could not return and maintain the standard of living which they have in Britain. There are limited opportunities in the areas from which they come and if they returned with money it would soon be dispersed among relatives and friends. And anyway they now have strong ties in Britain for their children almost certainly will not return.

During the 1960s Asians bought houses and brought over their families and began to establish their own community life. They accepted their conditions because it was an improvement on what they had had in Asia and because they thought that they would return. They tried to appear inconspicuous even if that meant not demanding their rights. When protests occurred they were phrased in the mildest possible tones.

As the economy began to decline the environment became more hostile towards Asians and the possibility of return less likely. Also, there was the development of a second generation of Asians who compared their achievements to white British people and who had no intention of returning to Asia. Thus, the mood of Asians in general changed and this was particularly so amongst youth.

Protests about discrimination and racism became more vociferous and militant and Asians began to take action in defence of their rights in Britain. If they became the scapegoats for bad housing or unemployment in some areas and physical violence was used against them the response, especially from the youth, was very militant. They were prepared to fight back ~~ir~~regardless of the publicity. The period of 'accommodation' was only suited to a situation where Asians were accepted or at least not resented and when these circumstances changed Asians had to change also and to fight back.

In any discussion of change amongst Asians it is essential to try and identify how youth are reacting. Changes are constantly occurring amongst Asians because as the children grow up they are further removed from their origins in rural Asia and instead

increasingly affected by their upbringing in Britain. Along with this general trend specific material changes in the environment in Britain must be taken into consideration.

Of crucial importance has been the decline in the British economy which has had important effects on Asian youth through high unemployment, reduced services and lower standards of living. This in turn has helped the development of racism and the growth of racist and fascist parties. Asian youth have therefore faced a very different situation from their parents and while still retaining their ethnic identity they have been forced to change large aspects of their culture and customs.

To understand the actual developments and likely trends of development amongst Asians it is essential to look first of all at economic, political and social changes in the environment in Britain and then to examine how youth will be affected by these changes. The circumstances in which they find themselves necessitate changes and Asian youth, because they have been brought up in Britain, are making important changes which their parents would not have made.

Section III

Class Formation and Class Consciousness

Asians' actions are the result of their intention to do something and of the circumstances in which they find themselves. These circumstances must be identified for they exert a determining influence over Asians' actions and the changes which have occurred amongst them. A full explanation comes from examining the dialectical relationship between material factors and Asians' consciousness.

On this basis a Marxist approach can explain why Asians act in a specific way and can locate the reasons for their actions in the material conditions of their existence. People's ideas and actions have a material basis. Marx held that:

"Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life".⁶⁴

However, a Marxist perspective is not deterministic for it recognises the role of individuals in the process of change and the relationship that individuals have with their environment. Marx argued that:

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past".⁶⁵

Asians in Britain are living in a capitalist society with a specific history. They have entered the working class and are in distinct relationships to other classes in Britain. Like other workers they are affected in specific ways by the capitalist system. To analyse change amongst Asians it is therefore necessary to examine their environment first, otherwise only the effects and not the causes will be examined.

It has been demonstrated that the links between factors in the environment and changes amongst Asians do exist. By establishing the position of Asians in the class structure and their relation to other classes it can then be demonstrated that these links are established on the basis of a class society in which Asians are inextricably linked.

It is implicit in idealist approaches that Asians will not become

part of the British working class because their aims are different from white British workers and because of their background.⁶⁶ Asians mainly came from a rural background and on the whole were middle-range farmers. They were neither very wealthy nor very poor and had migrated to raise the status of their families rather than for economic necessity. Asians therefore brought with them 'middle-class' attitudes such as buying property and starting up a business.

At first their attitudes reflected their economic position. Since they expected to return they took any jobs and did not complain about the conditions for their only interest was in accumulating money and raising their status in Asia. They only joined a union if they were approached to or if it was a condition of being taken on for a job. Their lack of English and the belief that they would be returning to Asia resulted in little contact between them and their white British workmates. In general then Asians had very little commitment to their workplace and very little interest in trying to change the conditions in it.

Some were concerned to better themselves in Britain and it was possible after saving hard for many years to set up a small business. Businesses were usually regarded as prestigious and they may have made greater earnings possible. In either case it was possible to earn substantial sums of money and to use it for the benefit of the family in Britain and Asia without becoming involved in either the workplace or the wider social context in Britain.

Two factors transformed this pattern; the influx of dependants, and the economic recession. Together they brought about a strengthening

of Asians' material ties to Britain and the knowledge that they would not return to Asia. If Asians were to stay in Britain they had to begin to take a greater interest in their environment for events in it had become important to them.

As the recession deepened it became less easy to send money home to the wider family in Asia for most migrants. Setting up in business became very unlikely and very hazardous as markets collapsed. With a fall in the demand for goods lay-offs began and the number unemployed began to rise. The level of industrial conflict began to rise as workers tried to defend their standards of living by striking for higher wages and Asian workers were drawn into these struggles.

This involved taking a greater interest in politics in the community and becoming involved in the organisation in the work-place. With the knowledge that they would not be returning to Asia and with social mobility blocked because of their low earnings and the recession Asians had become fixed in working-class jobs. Objectively, they were similar to white British workers and through involvement in defending their interests they began to recognise themselves as such.

First generation Asian migrants may not have begun to recognise themselves as working class till fairly recently.⁶⁷ Some may still not see themselves as such preferring to view themselves in terms familiar to Asia. As the recession deepens however the reality of the situation will push Asians towards a recognition and defence of their material interests. This process has gone fairly far for first generation Asian women have begun to see themselves as workers and have gone on strike for basic working-class demands such as the right to form a union.⁶⁸

Through the effects of growing up in Britain and as a result of the recession second generation Asians have experienced this process most strongly. Unlike their parents they have not been able to fulfill their ambitions to any large extent. It has become very difficult for them to buy houses and they are having to compete with other workers for council houses. This is one way in which they have increasingly been drawn into the working class in Britain.

More importantly the recession has increased the level of unemployment which has made it difficult for young Asians, even those who gained qualifications at school, to find jobs. They have been brought into competition with white British youth and are much closer to them because they are competing for the same jobs. Lower living standards have made it difficult for Asian youth to better themselves.

The inability of Asian youth to do better than their parents is largely due to their parents being in the working class. Westergaard and Resler have pointed to the restrictions on social mobility of being born in the working class and Asian youth have not been able to break out of their social class.⁶⁹ However, the recession has compounded this situation for there are far fewer jobs available and promotion has been reduced. On top of this Asians also face discrimination from potential employers.

For Asian migrants to find a job in Britain was an improvement on their conditions in rural Asia. This is not the case for the youth for they are likely to find jobs similar to their parents' but unlike them they relate their experience to living in Britain. Their

knowledge and awareness of living here makes them realise that they are taking working-class jobs and that they are unlikely to find anything better.

First generation Asians may have believed that after bringing over their dependants they could continue to work hard, set up a business and see their children well-educated and successful. Second generation Asians recognise that this is virtually impossible.⁷⁰ Like their white British classmates they recognise that they are unlikely to find good jobs.

Without the recession it might have been possible for Asians to advance themselves and to become successful. In the face of the recession Asians will become worse off. Youth may not be able to find steady jobs and many ⁿindustries in which Asians are presently concentrated may soon collapse.⁷¹ Like working-class youth in general Asians are angry about the conditions they find themselves in. They have very important similarities with white British working-class youth and they are aware of it.

The recession is unlikely to slacken for many years⁷² and it is therefore likely that Asians' consciousness of their position in the working class will be intensified. Though they may hope that their children will do better than themselves they will also start the socialisation of their children from a working-class point of view.

It is unlikely that the second generation will encourage what appears to them to be false hopes such as finding good jobs or

setting up in business. Like white British working-class parents they may hope that their children will succeed but they will similarly realise the difficulties in doing so. Unlike their parents the second generation will have a much better grasp of the reality of living in Britain.

There appears to be little chance of future generations of Asians moving out of the working class. Social mobility is very limited in Britain and Asians have the added problem of racism to face. First generation Asians are beginning to realise this in spite of the small material advances they may have made. For second and succeeding generations of Asians there will be even fewer material advances and their awareness of their position will be much greater,

Since the majority of Asians are part of the working class their relationship to British workers and their involvement in unions, strikes and workplace activities must be examined. This brings in the question of racism amongst the white British working class and the way in which racism is often used to prevent the formation of a unified workforce in a factory or the working class in general.

Asian migrants were generally accepted at work but they did not become involved in it to the same extent as white British workers. They were often excluded from meetings because they were unskilled or because nobody thought they they would be interested. If they worked on all-Asian shifts they usually missed meetings.⁷³ Language difficulties and a need to talk to fellow Asians also prevented them becoming involved in workplace activities.

The 1962 immigration act made a difference to this situation for immigrants began to appear as a threat to Britain. Up till then the contribution they were making to the British economy was widely recognised but the publicity over the act changed this completely.⁷⁴ The suggestion was that there were too many immigrants in Britain and that there were 'hordes' queueing up to enter. Subsequent immigration acts have had the same effect of creating fear, and at times panic, that there are 'too many' immigrants in Britain.⁷⁵ Such an atmosphere has been important in determining people's attitudes to Asians and other immigrant groups.

White working-class British were being persuaded by the media and politicians that there were too many immigrants and that action had to be taken. There was very little opposition to these ideas so their attitudes and views about Asians were inevitably influenced by them. A certain degree of hostility began to enter relations at work and it resurfaces every time there are stories about illegal immigrants or discussion about proposed immigration laws.⁷⁶

In the late 1960s and 1970s many of these stories began to appear to have a base in fact. The recession brought unemployment, falling living standards and cuts in social services. The belief that these problems were caused by too many immigrants was probably fairly widely held amongst white British workers. Again this resulted in hostility and it led to friction and conflict in some workplaces.⁷⁷

Importantly, this racism did not just spring out of itself, nor did it come from the interaction of Asian and white British workers in the workplace.⁷⁸ Rather, it came from general publicity about

immigrants and from the conscious efforts of some politicians and racist and fascist parties to exploit people's fears about immigrants. Once it had arisen it could be utilised by employers and governments to distract the attention of workers away from the real causes of the social problems which did exist.⁷⁹

However, this was only one trend for the effects of immigration acts and the recession had also brought about changes amongst Asians. They had begun to set down strong material ties and had begun to participate in the organisation of the workplace to a greater extent. They were concerned to defend and extend their material interests and realised that this would be best achieved through joining the struggles of their workmates. Asians during this period therefore became more conscious of union organisation and much more active in it.

Industrial conflict grew during the late 1960s and 1970s and Asians were involved in this like other groups of workers. They demonstrated that they were not a scab labour group prepared to undercut wages and thus forged links between themselves and white British workers. To an extent involvement in union activity and strikes could counter the bad publicity in the press but the consciousness of workers rises and falls and consequently Asian workers could be blamed one day and defended the next by workers.

In some cases, such as Imperial Typewriters, Asians have received little support from white British workers but in others such as Grunwicks they have been well supported. Asians have often proved to be the most militant workers in disputes and they have gained a lot of respect in some workplaces. They are now much more likely to

be involved in disputes and the running of the union because white British workers recognise that if they are divided they cannot win demands and because Asians have consciously involved themselves to a much greater extent in the union.

As well as Asians becoming involved in union activity white British workers have begun to take seriously disputes involving Asians.⁸⁰ In some early disputes white British workers saw their interests opposed to those of Asians or did not realise that disputes led by Asians directly involved them. This has become less common as more workers have been drawn into struggles to defend their living standards. Consciousness that workers must act together has grown and divisions based on race are becoming less common.⁸¹

Asians have taken the lead in many disputes because of their growing awareness of the need to defend themselves and the knowledge of how best to do so. They have led disputes and contacted officials to make sure they were supported.⁸² They are no longer a docile part of the workforce which leaves when a dispute arises so as to keep on earning money. Thus, they have recognised the need for unions and become active in them.

At a grass-roots level Asians have developed contacts with trade unionists although trade union officials have often been unco-operative towards Asians and in some cases virtually opposed to them. Ironically, this suggests that Asians are incorporated in the workforce for white British workers have faced exactly the same treatment for decades. Many strikes involving only white British workers have been badly let down by trade union officials.⁸³

It can be expected that second generation Asians will be involved in trade unions to a greater extent than their parents. They do not have the language problems that their parents had and they are more aware of the need to involve themselves in trade unions to defend their interests. Having grown up with each other white British and Asian youth do not have as great differences culturally as their parents did for they have a greater understanding of each other.

Unlike their parents Asian youth are much more prepared to take direct action in defence of their interests and are usually much more militant.⁸⁴ They do not feel that they are guests in Britain with no rights. They are also much more willing to join up with other organisations to protest against inequalities. It is therefore likely that Asian youth will be much more integrated into the workforce in terms of jobs and union organisation.

By involving themselves in workplace activities Asians are regarded as part of the working class by the majority of white British workers. Even so some white British workers are racist and there is a widespread belief that there are enough immigrants in Britain and that no more should be allowed to enter. Racist beliefs about immigrants will continue to exist while it is possible for politicians to gain votes or newspapers to sell more copies by playing on people's fears about immigration.

Cultural and religious factors create differences between white British and Asian workers. Language difficulties made communication difficult although this is less of a problem amongst the second generation. Dress and restrictions on eating and drinking also offer

barriers to communication though again this is less of a problem to Asian youth. Religious differences offer no real problems since less and less Asians adhere to their religious beliefs strictly.

Taken together differences such as these can create disunity between the work experience and the experience of living in an Asian community. But it would be wrong to conclude from this that ethnic identity exerts a dominant influence on Asians outside of the workplace. Certainly Asians tend to socialise with other Asians and to meet after religious ceremonies or to go to Asian films but so would any minority group and this does not conflict with Asians in general developing a working-class consciousness.

White British workers, when they socialise, meet with some friends who may be from the same place of work. Most socialising is done with relatives or at large functions such as the pictures or concerts. There is nothing especially different about these two patterns. The actual specific actions of Asians and white British workers is different in their leisure time but so are the actions of a worker who spends all his time in a pub and a worker who spends his gardening but who both work together.

At work Asians and white British workers get on together, take part in union meetings, work the same machines, etc.. They have the same material interests and the same orientation towards their conditions which is a basic working-class consciousness. There are differences between white British and Asian workers and outside of work they do not socialise much but this does not mean that they do not have a working-class consciousness for their support for each other during struggles

and their general orientation to the politics of the workplace are the same.

Thus, what might be called 'ethnic consciousness' does not determine the actions of Asian workers. First generation Asians were concerned to protect their ethnic identity and to try to pass it on to their children. They took many decisions and actions on the basis of their orientation to Asia and their ethnic identity and separateness did characterise them at first. However, many of the features of ethnic identity, for example, preferences in housing, were the result of the interaction of material and ideological factors.

'Ethnic consciousness' has had a decreasing effect upon the development of Asians' communities and upon their actions. Its main effects are upon aspects of behaviour of little importance such as dress, eating and drinking habits and religious observance. Asians are aware of their ethnic identity and are seeking to maintain it but in a drastically altered form and only of importance in minor matters.

Major changes occurred amongst Asians not because of their ethnic identity but because of factors in the environment.⁸⁵ Thus, although Asians' ethnic identity retains some importance on cultural matters what is of greater importance was the development of a working-class consciousness because of the environment in Britain. The key features in this process were the growth of material ties to Britain and the recession which forced Asians to defend their living standards.

Amongst subsequent generations of Asians this process will continue

to go further. Unlike their parents they have no real ties to rural Asia and the culture they have been socialised in is the changing culture of their parents. They have strong ties with Britain for this is where they were brought up and they understand the social environment in Britain much more than they would the rural one in Asia. Much more than their parents they recognise their position as working class for they were brought up in it.

Asian youth are aware of their ethnic identity and are usually proud of it. They recognise differences between themselves and white British youth and wish to maintain some aspects of their culture while changing other aspects of it. Thus, their ethnic identity does influence some of their actions but in general the development of a working-class consciousness has been the most important determining factor of their actions.

It is the case that Asians are now firmly fixed in the working class. Apart from taking working-class jobs they have also begun to develop a working-class consciousness.⁸⁶ Asians are becoming increasingly involved in workplace organisations and integrated in the working class. Asian ethnicity is losing its importance as an organising principle and now only determines minor matters of culture.⁸⁷ Thus, the development of Asian communities in Britain has involved their integration in the working class and the development of a working-class consciousness.

This has been argued on the basis of changes in the social, political and economic environment in Britain. These changes have

determined changes amongst Asians resulting in their integration in the working class. As a specific demonstration of this view the next chapter examines the political involvement of Asians in Britain and the reasons behind the changes that have occurred in it.

Chapter 6

Asians' Involvement in Politics and Industrial Disputes

Introduction

The Marxist analysis in this thesis has demonstrated the dialectical relationship between cultural and material factors in relation to Asians living in Britain. This chapter, in contrast to Chapter 5, examines specific aspects of Asians' life style in Britain; i.e. their involvement in the political organisations and disputes involving the working class in general. Their involvement in anti-racist activities and the methods used to pursue their aims will also be examined. Changes in the social, economic and political environment will be shown to be the major determinants of Asians' political action and their cultural background will be shown to have been important in affecting some of these processes.

The changes in the involvement of Asians in politics and disputes is a good example of the general changes that have occurred amongst them between 1959-79. To illustrate this, general changes in the form of organisation, type of leadership, level of militancy and involvement in British organisations must first be linked to changes in the economic, social and political environment in Britain. It is then possible to look in detail at Asians' participation in the political processes in Britain. Lastly, specific disputes and activities they have been involved in will be examined.

Section I

Asians and Politics, 1959-79

In rural Asia political action mainly took the form of competition

for positions of authority at a village level. The methods used to achieve office were the mobilisation of followers and groups and the construction of ties and relationships which could be used during political competition. Social relationships were closely intertwined with economic and political ones and competition in one involved the others. Political loyalties usually had their base in social and economic ties rather than in the merits of particular policies.¹

Asians were not only concerned with or knowledgeable about politics at a village level for they were involved in state elections in their countries and some had been involved in the struggles for national independence. Political parties existed and competed for votes amongst villagers.² International political issues, for example the partition of the Punjab, affected many of the Asian migrants who came to Britain.³ So while political ties at a village level were very important Asians were also aware of larger political systems and issues.

On their arrival in Britain it was the village ties which were of most importance. Lodging in another migrant's house usually involved supporting that person in disputes and the competitions for the political posts in the small organisations that had begun to spring up as more Asians migrated to Britain.⁴ In the IWA, for example, competition for posts was usually quite fierce.⁵

At first competition for posts within Asian organisations was conducted on the same basis as it had been in rural Asia. Leaders mobilised supporters and factions were formed for the purpose of fighting disputes and elections. Ties which originated in villages

in Asia were used to form factions in Britain. Some of the migrants who had been important in their village of origin, or whose family had, used this as a basis to gain support in Britain.

Other migrants who had lived in Britain longer and who helped new arrivals find jobs or houses used this 'obligation' as a basis to gain support. Middle-class, wealthy Asians used their higher status in Britain to gain political prestige. They argued that their command of English and education put them in a better situation to speak to British officials.⁶

Rivalries, hostility and the mobilisation of ties characterised political action amongst Asians in Britain. Bitter arguments between factions led to splits in some Asian organisations. These arguments often held back the work that Asian organisations could do and sometimes there might be two leaders claiming to represent the same group. Personal rivalries were often the basis for factions and splits rather than a difference in political attitude.⁷

In Britain Asians' organisations were of minor importance on welfare issues. There was little in the policy of these organisations over which people could disagree so personal characteristics, behaviour of relatives and friends and other stories and gossip formed the basis for disagreements and the formation of factions. Almost any pretence could be used by aspiring leaders.⁸

This situation still exists in some organisations concerned with cultural and religious matters. However, when there is a serious situation such as a threat to an Asian community the 'traditional'

leaders have been seen as irrelevant and Asians have organised themselves without their help.⁹

If leaders' rivalries have threatened Asians' material interests they have very quickly lost support ~~ir~~regardless of ties. Up till fairly recently leaders' actions made little difference to the majority of Asians. Since it did not really matter who the leader was for all leaders would have done the same thing Asians could afford to take decisions out of loyalties based in rural politics.¹⁰

In rural Asia all decisions had to be taken in line with factions for people were interrelated socially, politically and economically. To go against a leader in Asia was potentially dangerous for that leader might withdraw support in a dispute over land or a debt. In Britain Asians did not come under other people's influence to this extent for they were economically independent and did not rely on other people's patronage or generosity. Thus, Asians could take important decisions on the basis of their opinion rather than through loyalty or obligations.

Faced with physical assaults and verbal abuse Asian youth ignored traditional leaders' appeals for calm and established their own leadership.¹¹ They ignored these leaders because they were out of touch with the people they claimed to represent; the leaders were mainly middle class and the majority of Asians working class. Youth unlike their parents had no political ties rooted in the village in Asia and so had no loyalty to them. Despite the seriousness of the situation Asians' leaders were mainly concerned with gaining prestige and cultivating friendships with British officials without taking positive steps to defend Asian communities.¹²

This does not mean that 'traditional' leaders have lost their influence completely. In religious matters, for example, they may still hold sway. They may also be involved in local race relations groups and Asian welfare and professional groups. However, they no longer represent the Asian communities as they claim to for they often lead organisations with no real support. Even so they still use this as a basis to find themselves positions in organisations with some power and prestige.¹³

In the more recently formed and more important organisations faction fighting may still occur but it is usually over political differences and not personal ones.¹⁴ Leaders are elected on their political stand rather than on which one can muster the largest following. This is especially the case with youth for they do not have village ties to conflict with their own political beliefs. Leaders tend to be more representative, organisations more democratic and there is greater participation in them.¹⁵

When Asians decided not to return to Asia they became more interested in demanding their rights in Britain and it sometimes became necessary to form action groups to force councils and government departments into doing things.¹⁶ Before, a leader might have spoken to officials for other migrants but their lack of success and ready acquiescence to authority necessitated a more militant group response.

This was most markedly demonstrated in the case of anti-racist activities. At first Asians accepted racist attacks for it was argued that a militant response would polarise the situation and

create more trouble.¹⁷ Also, since most Asians thought that they would return they saw little point in becoming involved in conflict in Britain. Also, racism occurred occasionally at an individual level and was not seen as a major threat.

Such organisations that did exist related to specific Asian-orientated issues and did not usually involve themselves in British politics.¹⁸ They might occasionally send small delegations to public functions and invite dignitaries such as mayors to speak at their meetings. Asians felt they were doing well and did not see any need to join organisations to demand their rights.¹⁹

After deciding to stay in Britain Asians could still avoid racism for the recession was not beginning to take effect. Once it did, and Asians became the scapegoat for it, they began to be confronted more directly by racism. As the 1970s went on these processes became increasingly obvious. Asians' attitudes became more militant as they felt they had to respond to these attacks and consequently their organisations began to reflect this growing militancy.

IWAs were fairly typical of this process for while they encouraged their members to participate in British politics and took a firm line on racism some of their activities were rather trivial.²⁰ Further, their assumption that racism could be eradicated by demonstrating that Asians were willing to participate in the community had to be drastically revised in the face of mounting racism.

Like other Asian organisations IWAs began to take on a more militant line as they were threatened by racism in the 1970s.²¹

Declining services resulted in greater competition for those available so Asians began to organise themselves to demand their rights. The recession increased the general level of racial hostility so the question of organising self-defence groups became an issue in Asian communities.

This produced a split between parents and children and leaders and the communities. The leaders called for calm and arranged discussions between themselves and police, MPs and councillors. Parents remained passive for they were unsure of what they could do and mainly decided to follow their leaders' advice. Against this youth took to the streets to confront those who had threatened them. They defended themselves and were not interested in discussions with officials. Parents were frightened by this development at first although now older Asians appear to believe that they must defend themselves and must be militant rather than passive.²²

Initially, the organisations formed by Asian youth were not concerned with welfare activities but with self-defence from racist attacks and with their position in Britain.²³ They were much more aware of the general political situation in Britain and related much more to it. Thus, not only were their own organisations highly politicised but they joined British political organisations and worked with them over some issues.

In general Asians have been drawn into working along with or joining British organisations. Their growing involvement in trade unions is an obvious example. In anti-racist activities Asians have been brought into contact with the wider labour movement and political

parties. Increased awareness of British political processes and activity in them was made necessary by the economic recession, the resulting hostile environment and the decision to stay in Britain.

Asians in Britain have become increasingly differentiated along lines of wealth as the recession has deepened. Thus, Asian businessmen and professionals are becoming more widely separated from working-class Asians even though the former did provide leadership at first. Increasingly, rank-and-file Asians are not represented by organisations led by professionals but by elected working-class Asians.²⁴

There has been a general trend of increased militancy. This is happening faster in some areas than in others and to a greater degree amongst some groups than others. It is an uneven process and depends on many factors. Indians in Southall have been extremely militant in recent years as have Bengalees in Tower Hamlets. However, Pakistanis in general, because they have lived in Britain for a shorter time, are less militant and less concerned with the British political system.

Nevertheless, the trend is away from village-style politics and this is unlikely to be reversed. Since Asians are turning to British organisations to help them defend their interests the next section examines their involvement in them. This has also been sporadic and uneven and has depended on many factors.

Section II

Asian Involvement in British Organisations

Asian involvement in trade unions is one of the most important ways in which they have been drawn into mainstream British politics.

As well as representing their members trade unions are involved in discussions with governments and support the Labour Party financially and politically. They issue political statements and represent a major strand in the political system in Britain. Trade unions have brought governments down and they can mobilise their members in opposition to government policies.

However, individual members are not necessarily aware of the implications of union membership and some might disagree with union policies.²⁵ Attendance at meetings and other activities is often low and the actual running of it is usually in the hands of full-time union employees who have little contact with the people they are supposed to represent.²⁶ The members of a union are usually only likely to find out about the running of it during a strike though the situation varies widely.²⁷

British trade unions have a long history of opposing immigration and the belief that immigrants would act as a scab labour force, lowering wage rates and taking jobs away from British workers may still persist.²⁸ However, more recently the TUC has called for the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act.²⁹ Similarly, there is a general move towards involving Asians and other immigrants in the union movement and some unions have been fairly active in this way.³⁰

It is against this background that Asian involvement in unions must be examined. Their belief that they would only be staying temporarily in Britain was an important factor in holding Asians back from joining unions at first. Also, if they did join they sometimes fell behind in their union dues for the union did not appear to be

doing anything for them.³¹ The general notion that Asians were migrant workers could result in them being ignored and consequently they often did not join.

A problem which is reported to have held back the organisation of Asian workers at first was that they might give 'gifts' to people who found them a job and gifts to foremen and chargehands so as to be employed on the better-paid tasks.³² This type of system runs counter to the basic principles of trade unionism which holds that workers should take collective action to benefit everyone. Although this system was not commonplace it could flourish in areas where unionisation was weak.

Membership of a union does not necessarily bring Asians into contact with the wider political system or even with other workers in a factory. Asians, like other trade unionists, can work for years while their only contact with the union is paying dues. However, if the union is strong then participation is likely to be high and Asians will be involved in decisions, picketing and other activities. Well-organised branches also discuss wider issues so Asians can become aware of the wider political system in Britain. Further, once they became involved in unions they looked to them to support anti-racist activities and to take up cases of discrimination.

Asians have been badly let down by union officials in some cases.³³ On occasions this may have been because of racism and on others because of a lack of understanding or language difficulties. Possibly the belief that Asians intended to return resulted in them not being consulted over an issue or their conditions being worsened so that

white British workers did not suffer. The main reason for Asians being let down is because union support for any group of workers is minimal.³⁴

Membership of a union is important, even if it is fairly inactive, for it demonstrates an awareness of where people feel their interests lie. Also, it lays the basis for solidarity and the means to take action in defence of collective interests. Thus, Asians have been brought into the wider labour movement during disputes and have shown themselves to be militant trade unionists.

The other major British organisation in which Asians have been involved is the Labour Party.³⁵ In general, their support for it, like other workers, is limited to voting for its candidates in elections. Given the Labour Party's record on immigration and race relations the level of Asian support for it could be considered surprising.. In power it has introduced immigration laws which have been very restrictive and have caused Asians considerable difficulties and stress. Labour have given way to the clamour for strict immigration controls and have played other political parties at being 'toughest' on controls.

In Britain Labour is identified with representing the working class. Amongst workers it is recognised that Labour is likely to help workers more than the Conservative Party. Voting patterns are along class lines and the unions give their support to the Labour Party. However, the policies that Labour have introduced have often been detrimental to working-class interests and workers and trade unions have, at times, opposed some of the Labour government's policies.

Although Labour opposed the 1962 Immigration Act they introduced increasingly harsh and racist immigration laws when they were in power between 1964-70.³⁶ In an attempt to make this more acceptable to its critics race relations acts were also passed. The difference was that while immigration was severely controlled there was no way in which discrimination could be prevented; there was provision for conciliation but no criminal sactions were introduced against people who discriminated. Thus, while Labour proved to be very good at keeping immigrants out they showed no real interest in defending their rights in Britain.

Faced with an economic recession in the 1970s the Labour Party introduced policies which resulted in the working class having to bear the brunt of it. Cuts in living standards were made by holding down wages while prices rose. Cuts made in public services further lowered living standards and unemployment rose sharply. Whole working class areas in Britain became depressed and resentment about these conditions rose.³⁷

Like other political parties Labour denied responsibility for these problems and did nothing to counter allegations that immigrants were responsible. As violence against immigrants increased and extreme right-wing groups took to the streets Labour did nothing to prevent this and ensured that groups such as the NF were given police protection to march through immigrant communities demanding their repatriation.³⁸

Like the vast majority of British workers Asians are not involved in the running of local branches. The only knowledge of and contact with the Labour Party that most of them have is through what they read in papers and hear from friends. In some areas they are twice as likely

to vote for Labour.³⁹ In general Asians look to the Labour Party to be more helpful towards them and think that it does most to encourage good race relations.⁴⁰

Support for the Labour Party appears to be based on economic and class factors and this shows an awareness of the wider political issues in Britain. Like white British workers there is a general identification with class interests and the decision to vote Labour. Policies which will affect Asians living in Britain are the issues over which Asians are particularly concerned.⁴¹

When Asians first came to Britain they often did not bother to register as voters for they believed that they would return and that their interests lay in their countries of origin. Even after they began to register as voters they were more concerned with British parties' overseas policies. While older people are much more concerned with overseas issues than youth, the necessity of voting for the party which will best represent them has become the overriding interest.

In some areas Asians have become disillusioned with Labour and have voted for independent and extreme-left parties.⁴² While Labour still take the majority of Asians' votes there is likely to be a greater spread of votes than, for example, in 1964. The specific pattern in any one area depends on factors such as the personalities of the candidates, the general policies being pursued by the national parties and the history of the locality.

No political party has shown itself to be interested in representing

or defending the interests of Asians. Instead, too close an identification with them has been seen as a positive disadvantage and political parties have all been swayed by the anti-immigration lobby.

While these political parties have not attempted to represent Asians other organisations have and these have either been government-sponsored or voluntary. The former have been established by various Race Relations Bills and have had the dual role of collecting information on all immigrants and representing their interests and enforcing the law relating to race relations. On the whole these have been unsuccessful and have never involved the majority of Asians or even had contact with them.⁴³

These organisations are often mistrusted by Asians or regarded as the place to go if no-one in the Asian community can help. They are often hampered from contacting rank-and-file Asians by aspiring Asians 'leaders' who see membership of these organisations as prestigious and who regard them as potential power bases. Rank-and-file Asians have been put off by the 'official' nature of them and by a lack of awareness of what they do or by the knowledge that they cannot do a lot anyway.⁴⁴ This pattern has changed little over time for Asians are still not involved in these organisations and this is unlikely to change for youth have been very critical of them.⁴⁵

Voluntary race relations organisations have been more successful although the first of these, CARD (Campaign Against Racial Discrimination) was a failure.⁴⁶ It represented an attempt to bring together all the immigrant organisations under one umbrella group. It failed to do this because some groups thought it to be too moderate and others too

militant and eventually internal divisions over the type of policy CARD should pursue destroyed it.

Part of the reason for CARD's internal problems was that the immigrants involved had lived in Britain for different lengths of time. West Indians had lived in Britain for the longest period and had taken the decision to stay before or once they arrived in Britain. They were probably the most resentful of discrimination for they had experienced it more. Also, at this time Black Power groups were being formed (first in USA and then Britain) and this created an extremely militant voice within CARD.

However, the IWA GB, led by the Birmingham IWA, refused to join CARD because they believed it to be a middle-class organisation and because of its general orientation to fighting discrimination. They disagreed with its method of putting pressure on people at the top rather than building a base amongst workers. Only Southall IWA was affiliated to CARD and this was because it had split from the IWA GB during an internal power struggle.⁴⁷

Of the local groups affiliated to the Federation of Pakistani Associations (FPA) none were affiliated to CARD.⁴⁸ The FPA was formed in 1963 to press for better value for the foreign currency that Pakistanis were sending to their relatives in Asia.⁴⁹ These groups related to Pakistanis as a nationality group and not as coloured immigrants in Britain. They were concerned with specific Pakistan-oriented issues and did not visualise a role for themselves in British politics.⁵⁰

On average Pakistanis have lived in Britain for the shortest period of time and their organisations reflected this. In 1967 Pakistani communities consisted of students, professionals, entrepreneurs and workers.⁵¹ The latter were the vast majority and they lived in all-male households and planned to return to Pakistan though some had begun to bring their families to Britain. They did not believe their interests lay here and consequently they were prepared to accept discrimination.

Thus, immigrants were more likely to become involved in CARD if they had stayed in Britain for a long time and if they saw their long-term interests here. CARD's policy for combatting racism at first was that it should act as a pressure group to influence people in high positions.

This policy appeared reasonable at the time for economic, social and political conditions had not deteriorated to the extent that immigrants were under constant threat. This was especially the case with Asians for they had adopted a low profile up till then. More militant groups however argued that CARD should instead base itself amongst local communities of immigrants.

This issue brought about CARD's collapse. The 'pressure group' position was represented by the middle-class elements who believed that if leaders talked things over amongst themselves they could eventually end discrimination. Because of this CARD attracted a large number of opportunists who saw in it an excellent opportunity to gain prestige and influence. Discussions between 'leaders' resulted in immigrants themselves not being represented and CARD never really made contact with, or involved, large numbers of immigrants.⁵²

During the mid-1970s racism became a major threat to all immigrants and in response to the growth of racist and fascist organisations the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) was formed.⁵³ It does not seek to represent Asians and other immigrant groups but instead to mobilise blacks and whites against the racist and fascist groups in Britain. It is implicitly opposed to discrimination because of its opposition to policies and practices which threaten the rights of immigrants in Britain. There are several important differences between the ANL and CARD.

Ten years after CARD collapsed the environment in Britain had changed a great deal. The economic recession had created mass unemployment which particularly affected youth. It also created the conditions for the growth of racist and fascist parties. Asians became the scapegoat for falling living standards and consequently were subjected to a higher and more sustained level of racism than ever before.⁵⁴

Thus, important differences existed in the conditions in Britain between the times when CARD and ANL were active. Whereas Asians has thought they were doing well in Britain around 1967 this was less the case around 1977. Further, industrial conflict had become much more common as the recession deepened and many Asians had become more aware of the wider political scene and had been involved in strike action.

The settlement of families and the consequent setting down of roots in Britain resulted in Asians being concerned to defend their social, economic and political interests in Britain. Asians did feel threatened in the 1970s and so when the ANL offered a lead in

defending Asian communities by militant, united action many were in favour of supporting it.

Having lived in Britain for ten years longer than in the 1960s they were also much more aware of the political processes in Britain and they increasingly became involved in anti-racist activities. Asians were also much more aware of how best to defend their interests, for example, by involving themselves in organisations such as trade unions. The most important change which has occurred during this period, however, has been the growth of militancy amongst Asian youth.

Asian youth are more involved in Britain economically, socially and politically because they are not strongly attached to Asia. Many have never been there and for others Asia is only a distant memory. They are less bound to the culture and traditions of Asia and accept most aspects of life in Britain and actually prefer some.⁵⁵ Thus, they are more closely in touch with the environment in Britain and more involved in it.

Very few Asian youth do not see their future in Britain and so they are determined to ensure that it is possible to live here. To do so they have set up their own organisations and become involved in others which are militantly anti-racist. Asian youth therefore became involved in the ANL because it provided a focus for anti-racist activities.

Although Asian youth were much more involved in the ANL than their parents they also joined in demonstrations. An increased awareness of the environment and the importance of defending themselves

resulted in large support for the ANL. A growing recognition that 'traditional' leaders were failing to represent Asian communities led to a lack of support for them (especially amongst youth) and resulted in Asians supporting other groups and organisations.

The ANL also had a different orientation from CARD for it was not concerned to represent Asians and other immigrants. Rather it represented a co-ordinating organisation which called on other groups and its supporters to support specific activities such as preventing racist and fascist parties from marching through immigrants' communities. While it had contacts with officials from other groups it did not concentrate on gaining their support or putting pressure on them but instead sought the support of ordinary immigrants, thus effectively by-passing traditional leaders.

CARD was specifically concerned with discrimination which although prevalent did not appear as a direct threat to Asians around 1967. However, in the 1970s racist attacks were a threat to Asian communities. Thus, while CARD seemed irrelevant since Asians were doing quite well at that time the ANL was very important for it provided a focus for protest against racism and a means to defend Asian communities.

Thus, the ANL appeared in response to the specific demands of a particular situation; racism was on the increase, racist and fascist parties were gaining support and Asians were beginning to fight back. The ANL gained support from Asians because it united blacks and whites through its anti-racist activities. CARD failed because it did not attract support from the rank-and-file and it did not mobilise people

in action. While the ANL successfully involved many Asians, CARD mainly involved a few 'leaders' from the Asian communities.

There have been considerable changes in the way Asians have related to British organisations since they first came to Britain. The general trend is for a greater awareness of events and their effects in the economic, social and political environment and a greater involvement in them. Asians have become more militant in defending their rights and have changed from being 'quiet' and 'grateful' to 'angry' and 'resentful'. 'Traditional' leaders have lost their place to people elected from within the community.

Asians' material interests came to lie to Britain and once they recognised the need to defend them they became involved with British organisations which would help them do so.⁵⁶ As the pressure on their communities increased they became more militant in defending themselves. Thus, Asians increasingly became involved in political struggles because of changes in the economic, social and political environment which directly affected their interests in living in Britain.

These changes have taken place at different speeds among different sections of the Asian population. Some areas have been affected by racism more than others and are consequently more militant. The last section looks at some examples of Asians' involvement in disputes and political action to illustrate the changes that are taking place and how this process is uneven and sporadic.

Section III

Asians in Disputes and Political Action

Data on strikes and other disputes which have involved Asians

who are a minority of the workforce is rarely recorded, so it is impossible to construct a full picture of the trends which have been developing.⁵⁷ Even so, the well-recorded 'racial' strikes offer sufficient opportunity to illustrate the changes that have occurred in the disputes Asians are involved in and the reasons for them.

One of the earliest types of dispute that Asians were involved in was over the right to practise aspects of their religion or culture. An example of this was the dispute over the right of Sikhs to wear turbans when working on buses.⁵⁸ This dispute first arose in 1959 and in 1969 disputes of a similar nature were still taking place. Two aspects of this dispute need to be examined; the reasons why the dispute arose and the way in which it was organised.

Busmen generally did not wear their caps and inspectors did not try to enforce the rule. However, Sikhs were sacked for refusing to take their turbans off while on duty. They persisted in the right to wear turbans so as to be true to their convictions. Refusal to let them wear turbans was taken as religious persecution and an affront to the dignity of their race.

The Sikhs involved in this dispute saw it not only as a case of discrimination but also as a means to publicly demonstrate to other Sikhs who had abandoned their religious symbols since coming to Britain that they should maintain their culture and religion. They were worried that the basis of their religion would be undermined which constituted a moral threat, especially to their children.

Refusal to allow Sikhs to wear turbans was initially decided on

the basis that if an exception was allowed for Sikhs there might be no end to what busmen would wear. Once this decision was taken it became very difficult for those who had done so to reverse it for they would then have lost face. Therefore, Sikhs had to put a lot of pressure on to win their cause.

In the first of these disputes one Sikh waged a personal campaign for several years to revert the decision in Manchester. He campaigned for his case by lobbying councillors and trying to gain a majority of them to support his request to allow Sikhs to wear turbans. He also tried to win public opinion to his side by collecting petitions and by gaining the support of religious leaders and Indian politicians and diplomats. The emphasis was on winning the support of individuals rather than involving other Asians in a militant campaign against discrimination.

A similar dispute began in 1967 in Wolverhampton but it was handled differently. The main leaders were members of Akali Dal which was a militant Sikh party led by religio-political figures.⁵⁹ The leader had formed a branch for the explicit purpose of protecting the Sikh heritage in Britain. They were followed into the dispute by the local IWA who treated it as a case of discrimination and not especially a religious matter. They pushed for the union to deal with the matter but even after a mass meeting had supported the right of Sikhs to wear turbans the request was turned down.

After the union refused to support a strike to pursue this demand the emphasis turned to demonstrations and to trying to gain the turban a place in the forthcoming race relations bill. Neither

of these tactics were successful so a Sikh threatened to burn himself alive unless the rule was changed. Fear of bad publicity eventually resulted in the rule being changed. Although both campaigns were over the same issue and both were successful there were important differences between them.

These differences were not simply due to the individuals involved though this was important. In the first instance the person involved had no political party to work through while in the second case part of the reason for becoming involved was to gain support for the Akali Dal. The first campaign was concerned to win over 'important' individuals while the second sought to mobilise support from workers on the buses and the Asian community.

Thus, the second campaign was more militant and it did reflect a change in attitude of Asians, for more of them were prepared to demonstrate their unwillingness to accept discrimination. In the second campaign attention was drawn to Asians because they demonstrated their case openly and militantly whereas the first campaign remained largely inconspicuous by trying to influence individuals behind the scenes. The attempt to win strike action also demonstrated a greater willingness to use militant tactics which was absent from the first campaign.

Individual attributes and personalities help to explain the differences in the type of campaign waged. In the second, competition for leadership resulted in leaders trying to outdo each other in militancy. Despite this difference the similarities between the two campaigns are much more important. Crucially, these campaigns were

for a specific right for Sikhs. They were not concerned with Sikhs at work, or finding a house, etc. but with maintaining an aspect of their religion and culture. Thus, this type of dispute did not lead to greater involvement in the wider British political processes although Asians had become more militant in pursuing their goals by 1967.

In 1965 a major dispute occurred at Woolf's in Southall.⁶⁰ This strike is a well-known 'racial' one for 95% of the strikers were Punjabi Sikhs. Although it arose over the dismissal of a worker it had been developing for five years. The workers had attempted to establish a union in the factory in 1960 but this attempt failed after the management refused to recognise the union and the workers were afraid to go on strike to force the management to change its decision.⁶¹

In 1964 a union was successfully organised mainly through the active intervention of the IWA. They became involved because of complaints about 'gifts' and 'bribery'. Being put on the 'right' job could mean a wage of £25 instead of £12. Faced with an organised workforce, Woolf's management gave in for they totally relied on Asian workers. The leaders of the union branch were concerned to abolish the gift system and the power system which it buttressed.

After the union had been formed the workers began to make demands and used one-day strikes and overtime bans in pursuit of them. Woolf's dismissed men for slight breaches of rules. However, when they dismissed a man for allegedly insulting a foreman the workers came out on strike for three weeks until the management re-instated

him. In 1965 the management sacked ten men, including a shop steward. The cases were taken up under the national agreements for such disputes and eventually the panel found in favour of the workers.

Because the cases had taken months many workers were dissatisfied with the union's handling of the cases and they began to withhold their union contributions. Thus, a few days after the cases had been settled while the morale of the union was low the management sacked another worker.⁶² Few meetings were held, there were vacancies for shop stewards, membership had lapsed in many cases and there was a general disillusionment with the union.

Once on strike the Asians remained solid but because few of them had been members at the beginning of the strike there was confusion over whether the strike was 'official'. While the union supported the strike they could not, under their rules, pay the workers strike money. Without strike pay they could not stay out for long and so they felt let down by the union and their own shop stewards.

Having joined the union Asians followed union principles and methods of organisation and the strike was organised in a typical union manner. Their contacts with union officials brought them into contact with the union bureaucracy and its rules; the union acted slowly and in accordance with its rules ~~if~~ regardless of whether they were harsh and hindered the workers' struggle at Woolf's.

Unlike the turban dispute the strike at Woolf's was over a union demand. Workers there went on strike against management's arbitrary powers to dismiss a worker. When on strike they organised

themselves like any other group of workers on strike. It must be stressed that this was not a racial dispute and that the Asians involved were furthering a union demand. The failure of union support to materialise was due to the bureaucratic nature of the union and not racism.

Around 1965-69 Asians were showing their willingness to become involved in militant action in defence of their interests. In 1960 Asian workers at Woolf's had been unwilling to take strike action in defence of their interests. In the turban dispute at this time one person took it upon himself to win over individuals to support his cause. The experience of living in Britain and the recognition that their interests increasingly existed here were largely responsible in determining the increasingly militant attitude they had towards disputes.

In the early 1970s a different type of struggle began to emerge. Typical cases were the strikes at Mansfield Hosiery and Imperial Typewriters.⁶³ In these disputes the initial problem was over money but then spread over into discrimination at work. These disputes also highlighted the way unions were unwilling to support workers in their demands. Even so Asian workers used the union as far as possible and took typical industrial action.

Asians' opportunities for promotion were sometimes restricted by discriminatory work practices. Unions might tacitly support these policies which favoured white British workers so as not to come into conflict with them or the management. Thus, when Asian workers took action against discrimination they came into conflict with white British workers, union officials and management.

When Asian workers went on strike for an increase in wages they were supported by the union and white British workers. Once they protested against discrimination they lost the support of both. White British workers realised that they had a common interest in fighting wage demands with Asians but saw promotion of Asians as a threat to the security of their own jobs and their promotion chances. White British workers were in a very favourable position and they did not want to lose it.

In this situation the management and the union could split the workforce thus destroying solidarity amongst workers. Keeping the workforce divided through job and race was a useful tool which the management wanted to be able to exploit. Union officials should not have supported this measure but as they regarded their role as mediators they often opted for the most peaceful way out.⁶⁴

This type of dispute demonstrates a higher level of political consciousness than in the 1960s; Asians had recognised their interests and were using all available means to advance them. They were doing this ~~ir~~regardless of public opinion for the argument that quietism and conformity would best advance their interests was being proven false. Only by taking on employers, unions, other workers and public opinion could Asian workers begin to advance their interests.

Along with this type of action Asians had shown themselves willing to support general wage demands or disputes only involving white British workers. Thus, as economic conditions worsened Asians became more prepared to take militant action to defend their interests. Their experience of living in Britain and the recruitment of Asian youth encouraged involvement and militancy.

Part of the reason for the development of militancy has been the type of industry in which Asians have found jobs. In industries such as textiles, unions have a reputation of collaboration with management. For workers to win their demands they usually have to fight without the union's help and often against it too. In other industries there may not be a union to help the workers, for example, the rag-trade and small producers who prey on people who cannot find alternative work.⁶⁵ In these cases, where the workers do not have the bargaining power of a large union behind them, they often have to take militant action.

As the recession deepened in the late 1970s the best-known strikes involving Asians have been disputes at small workplaces on the fringe of industry. Grunwicks is an example of the type of dispute and it does mark a change from those in the early 1970s. There are important differences in the reasons for these strikes and in the way in which they are organised from earlier disputes involving Asians.

As the recession has worsened in Britain small manufacturers have struggled to survive as markets have fallen away and competition has become fiercer. These firms often employ immigrant labour for white British labour moved out many years ago. Often, the labour is female and some firms virtually only employ Asian women because the wages appeared to be so low a few years ago no-one else would work for them. Low wages, poor conditions and lack of organisation amongst the workforce characterise these firms.

These disputes have arisen over conditions but have been complicated by the formation of a union by the workers and the refusal

to recognise it by the management. Asian workers have taken action because of the poor conditions and as they are much more aware of unions they have sought their help. The management of small firms are notoriously anti-union for they prefer to have an unorganised, weak workforce.

Workers at these firms have generally formed a union for the specific purpose of going on strike to protest about the conditions and in some cases have only formed a union once on strike. They have gained the support of their union and when the strike has dragged on for many months, the support of the wider labour movement. At Grunwicks, for example, workers came from all over Britain to show their solidarity with the strikers by joining them on picket lines.

Asians workers have been striking for the most basic of union demands; the right to organise a union. Because of this they have received a lot of support from trade unionists in Britain. In these disputes they have been very militant and have had to push the less-than-militant unions into action. Like white British workers they have found the unions to be good at talking about action but not so good at doing something about it.⁶⁶

What is most remarkable about recent disputes is that it is mainly women that have been involved. Asian women should ideally not take work outside the home yet they have led strikes and stood up to scabs, the police and their own families to win disputes. Some have done this in open defiance of their husbands and families.⁶⁷

It was the effects of the recession which forced Asian women out

to work in the first place and it is the effects of the recession which have led them to become militant trade unionists. To remain profitable wage rates have been cut as far as possible but Asian women have not accepted this. Economic necessity has forced them to demand higher wages and to do that they have recognised the need to organise themselves and form a union.

While the need for money (forced on them by the fall in living standards) has brought Asian women out on strike it is the length of stay in Britain and a growing awareness of the political processes here that has resulted in them recognising the need to form a union. Asian women have lagged behind their men in this respect for they were last to come here and only recently had to take employment. Though inexperienced themselves they have the experience of other Asian workers to fall back on and have quickly learnt how to make their protests felt.

In traditional industries such as textiles Asians are having to become involved in disputes to save jobs. In non-unionised, small workplaces Asians are striking for a decent wage and the right to organise themselves. The economic recession has forced Asians into militant activity. The late 1970s have seen a continuation of the trend which was apparent in the early 1970s. Asian women are following the lead given by Asian men who were involved from a much earlier stage in militant activity.

There are several differences worth noting between the early and late 1970s. The unions have taken more positive steps to recruit, involve and represent Asian workers and during this decade Asians have

become more involved in the running of the unions they are members of. In general there is a much wider acceptance of Asians as union members. Thus, Asians come out on strike because of discriminatory work practices less frequently in the late 1970s. Asians, more than ever, are involved in the same type of struggle as white British workers.

Asians have used strikes to protest about racism and the racist and fascist parties. In 1978, 8-10,000 Asians came out on strike against racial violence in London's East End.⁶⁸ In Southall in 1979 thousands of Asians came out on strike in protest at the National Front being allowed to hold an election meeting in the Town Hall.⁶⁹ The use of strike action to protest at wider political issues shows a higher level of politicisation than existed even in the early 1970s.

This process of politicisation has occurred in other areas of Asians' community life. For example, in some areas in Britain housing groups have been set up to demand better houses from local councils. When Asians first came to Britain they found houses and other services through kin and friends. Since then the environment has changed drastically and Asians have greater contacts with local councils either for council housing or because of the property they own requiring renovation or clearance.

Asians have found that to pursue their interests it is necessary for them to form organisations and they have often had to resort to militant tactics to achieve their aims. This is not the case in all areas of Asians' social life but it does illustrate that in general there has been an increased awareness of the political system in Britain and a rise in militancy amongst Asians. However, it is in anti-racist activities that these changes have been most marked.

Protests about discrimination and racism, when Asians bothered to make them, were usually, directed at councillors, MPs and police officials and diplomats of their embassies in Britain the early 1960s. These protests were passed up a hierarchical chain to these people and there was no direct protests. Also, the protests were passive and did not involve people in action. They had an air of respectful deference about them for Asians did not think they would remain in Britain and believed they were 'lucky' to have the opportunity to work in Britain.

Some organisations such as IWAs did take up cases of discrimination and were more militant over racism. In general, however, they, like other Asian organisations, were more concerned with welfare issues and did not see a place for themselves in British politics. They closely reflected the attitudes of Asians in Britain at that time. Racism was not a major threat to the Asian communities for economic, social and political conditions had not begun to deteriorate. As well as this Asians did not see their long-term interests remaining in Britain and so they had no interest in militant protests about racism and discrimination.

This situation did not change much during the 1960s though Asians began to bring their families to Britain and began to 'sink roots'. Racism did not pose an immediate threat though Asians became more conscious and less tolerant of it. In the 1970s however racism became a permanent threat hanging over Asian communities and the problem of how to counter it became an issue of concern to Asians.

Many older Asians were prepared to allow their 'traditional'

leaders to have talks with various officials while trying to avoid trouble as much as possible themselves.⁷⁰ Asian youth rejected this position and instead took action themselves. Demonstrations, pickets and self-defence organisations were organised by Asian youth to directly confront racists. These activities were frowned upon by older Asians but they are beginning to realise that to prevent racism it is essential to do so directly and militantly.

This change amongst Asians was due to changes in the environment and to the development of the second generation of Asians. As the recession worsened a fall in living standards and a rise in unemployment created the conditions in which Asians were blamed for these problems. Frustration and anger could be vented on Asians for politicians and the media made it almost respectable to blame immigrants for social problems.

Asians who had been born or brought up in Britain reacted angrily to this racism for they felt they 'belonged' here. They saw their future in Britain but recognised that this would be impossible in a hostile environment. Unlike their parents they were not 'grateful' to be in Britain and they set their standards by those of white British youth. They were also more aware of the wider political system and how it affected them.

Thus, from about 1975 Asian youth have taken to the streets to demonstrate their opposition to racism. Organisations were set up, completely independent from 'traditional' leaders, which tried to mobilise rank-and-file Asians into demonstrations and marches.⁷¹ Instead of politely asking for talks with officials they led demonstrations to show they would not be intimidated by racism.

Racism had increased because of the declining social conditions in Britain and because governments were not prepared to accept the blame for this. Increased militancy resulted from the development of Asians' interests here which made them unwilling to accept racist abuse and attacks. Thus, the development of Asian militancy can be traced back to factors in the environment.

Apart from the upsurge of militancy the other notable factor amongst Asians in Britain since 1959 is the unevenness of political developments. Although the overall trend is fairly obvious each Asian community has faced different pressures and problems and reacted in different ways. In the late 1970s, especially, some communities became extremely militant for short periods of time while others have experienced very little trouble.

This unevenness is due to many factors but one of the most important is the specific effects of the recession in a particular area for some areas have been hit harder than others. Consequently, the social conditions in which racism thrives may be absent from some areas. Particular areas also have a history of their own which must be examined for it is an important factor in determining specific actions. And of course the particular Asian community involved must be examined for differences amongst Asians result in them acting differently.

However, it must be stressed that Asians in general are becoming more militant in response to general trends in the economic, social and political environment. For example, in Southall, Sikhs are the predominant group while in London's East End Bengalees are the

predominant group. Both reacted militantly to racist attacks; in Southall Asian youth chanted "Blood for blood" while in the East End they chanted "Come what may we're here to stay".

In the area of political action, as in other areas of Asian life, a full understanding of Asians' actions is only possible by examining the dialectical relationship between the environment and Asians' culture. The substantial changes that have occurred amongst Asians are directly or indirectly linked to factors in the environment, and unless the environment is fully examined the changes taking place amongst Asians will only be partly understood.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The underlying argument in this thesis is that changes in the social, political and economic environment have to be analysed so as to locate Asians within the British social system. By adopting a Marxist perspective which is concerned with the dialectical relationship between the material environment and the culture of Asians it has been possible to examine the changes that have taken place amongst Asians and to explain these fully.

Theoretical approaches to the study of Asians which did not take the external environment into account in a systematic way located the reason for change only within their communities. In contrast, the empirical study in Chapter 4 of the changes that had taken place amongst Asians demonstrated that the reasons for change lay in the dialectical relationship between the environment and Asians' culture.

It was argued in Chapter 6 that the changes taking place amongst Asians are sporadic.¹ This is due to differences in the way in which the environment has affected different Asian communities. In spite of this, their actions form part of more general trends and can therefore be explained without recourse to arguments resting on asserted differences between different communities.

In concluding this thesis it is necessary to briefly review the major developments and trends amongst Asians and the explanations of these that have been put forward. Then, the wider implications of the study of migrant groups can be considered and some specific suggestions

about the future of Asians in Britain and studies of them can be made.

Changes in the British economy over the last twenty years have affected all aspects of British society. When Asians first came to Britain the economy was generally expanding which meant that unemployment was very low and Asians could find jobs easily. However, the jobs they found were often the jobs that white British workers had moved out of in service and declining industries so Asians' opportunities to improve their position were very limited.

Even so Asians found the wages good and like their British work-mates enjoyed a fairly highly standard of living. Rising profits and low unemployment resulted in employers giving way to wage demands. Shop-floor organisations were strong and workers were generally confident during this period.² Companies preferred to accept wage demands rather than face disruption and possibly lose workers.³

This situation began to change in the late 1960s and worsened throughout the 1970s. The long boom turned to slump and unemployment began to rise while living standards fell. Some industries, such as textiles which employed many Asians, were hit very badly by the recession and began to lay off workers. Other industries went through long industrial struggles as employers refused to meet workers' wage demands.

Social advancement, which had seemed briefly possible, increasingly became denied to the working class and their families.⁴ Prolonged strikes to win wage demands and sometimes to defend jobs became more

common especially as governments stepped in to control inflation by holding down wage increases. Governments tried to control the decline in the British economy by cutting public spending and redirecting this money into private industry.⁵

Cuts in welfare services and in the numbers of public employees further reduced living standards and increased unemployment thus increasing competition for declining resources. For example, in housing, the situation deteriorated rapidly creating unemployment amongst building workers and an increasing problem of homelessness and overcrowding.

In such conditions a scapegoat was found in the form of immigrants. They were blamed for everything - one day they would be blamed for 'scrounging' off the social security system while the next they would be blamed for working too much overtime and so depriving white British workers of a job.⁶ This situation was worsened by the development of racist and fascist parties, by the actions of governments and by hysterical stories in the press.

Blaming the economic recession and the accompanying social problems on immigrants instead of on the capitalist system and government actions was useful for governments and capitalists for it diverted anger and frustration away from them and at immigrants instead. Governments had passed laws against immigration and this helped to create the belief amongst the general public that there were too many immigrants, that they posed a threat and that they were depriving white British people of resources.

Racist and fascist parties began to grow as these beliefs became widespread and this increased the hostile atmosphere towards Asians and other immigrants. However, Asians had been drawn into strikes with white British workers and links between them had been forged. Also, many white British workers became involved in anti-racist activities and supported Asian workforces involved in disputes. So while a hostile environment did exist at times it was countered by the involvement of white British and Asian workers in the workplace and in anti-racist activities.

From a situation of a fairly high standard of living and general acceptance of Asians in 1959 problems had arisen by 1979. Unemployment had risen dramatically, living standards had fallen and social services had been cut. Consequently, tensions began to rise in the workplace and community between workers and employers and between white and black workers. Asians were affected directly by these changes and also indirectly through the interrelationship of a number of factors.

One of the earliest changes amongst Asians was due to changes in the immigration laws. These restricted the entry of unskilled immigrants almost completely and prevented migrants from returning to Asia for a number of years then remigrating to Britain for another few years. To gain any benefit from living in Britain it became necessary to stay for a number of years and so migrants' families came to Britain to make this situation bearable.

The immigration laws left migrants little option but to settle in Britain for a number of years. Because of this Asians' ties in Britain became much stronger; they had to buy a house for their families and

their children began to grow up and go to school here. Also, they developed friendships within Asian communities and began to develop a social scene.

Although Asians were often in the lower-paid jobs they were better-off materially than they had been in Asia. However, they sometimes had to work shifts or overtime to earn a 'decent' wage. When demand for goods fell because of the recession companies did not require workers to do overtime and consequently this reduced Asians' wages. A general fall in living standards further depressed their wages and they tended to be hit worse in common with other low-paid workers.⁷

When Asians first came to Britain they tended to move into industries which were depressed and labour-intensive. These industries have begun to close down as demand has fallen and this threatens Asians in several ways. In a period of high unemployment there is little chance of people finding jobs once they are made redundant. Also, since jobs are lost faster than they are replaced, it becomes very difficult for young people to find jobs which in turn makes it unlikely that they will learn a skill.

Thus, the recession put the jobs Asians filled at risk, reduced their living standards and made social advancement for their children less likely. Other consequences followed on from these changes in the economy. Workers began to take action to defend their living standards and Asians became involved with these struggles for their interests were increasingly coming to lie in Britain.

They became more closely involved in organisations such as trade unions and began to take a greater interest in wider political issues. They became less tolerant of racism and less prepared to accept discrimination. This process has been hastened along by the development of youth who have grown up in Britain and set their standards by those of white British youth. They have been extremely militant when faced with racism and discrimination.

Unlike their parents they do not have a rural village background against which to judge their standard of living and achievements. They are much more aware of the wider social environment than their parents and are more adept at moving in it. Although they wish to maintain their culture they are also keen to change aspects of it and are prepared to accept aspects of British culture.⁸ Asian youth are changing some aspects of their culture very rapidly; for example, the system of arranged marriages.⁹

Important changes have occurred amongst Asian women since they began to arrive in large numbers in the mid-1960s. While their husbands could afford to keep them in the house at first this has not been possible as the economic recession has deepened. Asian women have had to work to earn money for the family and consequently have begun to expect a bigger say in family affairs than would normally be allowed in a traditional family.

The experience of work has been very important in this connection for it has given Asian women an economic independence they have never had before and it has helped them develop a knowledge of wider issues outside the dominance of their husbands. When Asian women have become

involved in strikes they have been brought into contact with the wider labour movement. Further, some Asian women who work are less prepared to accept the authority and decisions of their husbands and fathers than they would have been in rural Asia.¹⁰

Up till the 1970s Asians had more or less accepted racism and discrimination. Neither had appeared dangerous and protests about them had been polite and directed through British and Asian officials. Asians' life-style in Britain was an improvement on what it had been in Asia so they were prepared to put up with the low level of racism that existed.

In the 1970s the higher level of racism brought about an angry and militant response from Asian youth. This went completely against their parents wishes and the views expressed by the 'traditional' leaders of Asian communities. Older Asians are still more prepared to accept discrimination and racism than youth though they too have begun to regard militant protests as the only effective way of making their case heard.

Underlying the changes amongst Asians since 1959 have been changes in the economic, political and social environment in Britain. Out of these, two key sets of factors emerge: the introduction of immigration laws which determined the pattern of settlement; and the economic recession which forced Asians directly and indirectly to take specific actions.

By examining changes in the social environment in Britain it has been possible to establish that these changes were mainly

responsible for Asians' actions. However, without taking into account the specific culture of different groups and the local conditions in which they find themselves it is not possible to fully explain any specific individuals' or groups' actions. These factors, taken into consideration within the framework set by changes in the environment, complete the explanation of Asians' actions.

The Marxist approach is applicable to minority groups, the wider population and relations between the two. By examining the environment in which social action takes place it is then possible to begin to explain why certain actions occur. An example of this is the way in which the Marxist approach can explain why Asians failed to become successful businessmen and theories based on ethnicity cannot.

When Asians first arrived in Britain they utilised their culture to build up a basis of kin, friends and connections. Some utilised these and with help could set up a small business. If Britain's economy had not begun to decline Asians, through helping each other, might well have become a community of small businessmen. However, ~~it~~ regardless of their ethnicity this process was prevented by the recession which reduced their ability to save and the ability of businessmen to help other Asians out. Consequently, they became entrenched in working-class jobs.

Once this occurred Asians became much more concerned with defending their interests at an immediate level and so began to take a greater interest in trade unions and wider political issues. Thus, an understanding of factors in the environment is necessary to explain Asians' increased involvement in working-class organisations. Theories

based on ethnicity however cannot by themselves serve as an explanation of the actions of minority groups.

Studies of Asians in Britain and other minority groups which have been based on theories of ethnicity have tended to produce very patchy results.¹¹ The impression that arises from these studies is that groups of Asians in Britain are totally different. They fail to recognise that while there are differences between different communities there are underlying trends because Asian communities are being affected by the same processes and exist in the same environment.

Castles and Kosak are therefore correct to stress the similarities between migrants in Western European capitalist countries; they have been recruited in a similar fashion, they are employed in similar ways and they occupy a similar position in each country. The underlying similarities are derived from their relation to the capitalist system and it is this system and the relation between it and immigrant workers that Castles and Kosack examine.¹²

Asian migrant workers may have specific differences from other migrant groups but they also have similarities which are much more important. Their experiences can therefore be compared to those of other migrant groups and the similarities and differences examined and explained. Knowledge of the culture and history of specific groups is necessary however for what must be examined is the dialectical relationship between the two sets of factors not just one or other of them.

Given the circumstances Asians find themselves in at the present

it is worth suggesting the developments that are likely to take place in the future. Unemployment will probably continue to rise which will increasingly pose problems for Asians. Youth unemployment is already high and if this continues there is little prospect of Asians moving out of the type of jobs they tended to do when they first migrated to Britain.¹³

Once trapped in this circle it is very difficult for people to break out of it and there is no chance of Asians as a whole doing so.¹⁴ Individuals may be able to do so through education but this avenue is not seen as very promising by Asian youth. Parents believed that education offered their children an opportunity to advance themselves but youth do not and this will be even less the case with their children.¹⁵

The industries in which Asians tend to be concentrated are often those which are under most pressure from the decline in demand and increased competition. As pressure is put on employers to become more competitive they will try to cut down on their wages bill but since they need the money they will be forced to fight back.

Asians will also come into keener competition for welfare services such as housing for they will not be able to afford to buy houses. Many will become dependent on social services after being made unemployed. In these conditions some Asians may think of returning to Asia. Older Asians and those who came most recently and are least settled may actually return.¹⁶ For most Asians there is too much in Britain for them to simply leave and youth have many contacts and friends here. The latter have been here for most or all of their lives so for them Britain is their home.

An interesting development out of Asian youth's involvement in anti-racist activities is that they have, in some areas, begun to develop links with West Indian youth.¹⁷ At the present time Asian youth see themselves as 'Asians in Britain' rather than from 'such-and-such a country' and increasingly they are coming to identify themselves as 'Black British'.¹⁸

Asian youth are becoming similar to their British counterparts in terms of increased truancy and the gang syndrome and they are increasingly less prepared to accept the dominance of their fathers. They are also less likely to follow other cultural and religious practices and they are likely to give their children more freedom than they themselves had.¹⁹ As this process continues the attitudes of young Asians will become increasingly similar to those of young white British.

In the long term it is likely that Asians will become more involved with the white British working class. There are factors such as high unemployment which might give rise to a level of racism which would prevent this happening but it is more likely that in the recession workers unite to defend their interests. As well as these general problems Asians have also faced difficulties due to race relations and immigration policy.

A good deal of hardship is caused by restricting the flow of dependants into Britain.²⁰ Asians have decided to stay in Britain yet they are having to wait years for their families to be given permission to enter. If they were to be allowed to enter immediately this would cause few problems for there is a small number of people involved.²¹

Instead governments have maintained tough, unnecessary restrictions in order to pander to the anti-immigration lobby rather than take on this propaganda battle.

In the field of race relations a similar situation has developed. Government policy has been largely restrained by the fear that to favour groups who are discriminated against would lose them votes. Race relations laws have had little teeth and considering the resources governments have available encouraging good race relations is obviously given a low priority. This situation is likely to continue for most politicians in all parties have been concerned with gaining or maintaining power, not with preventing racism and discrimination.²²

Discrimination exists and it is possible, through legislation and the activities of race relations bodies, to stop it. However, successive governments have consistently demonstrated that they are more concerned about being 'tough' on immigration. Thus, the race relations legislation and the bodies they have established stand in contradiction to the racist legislation which they have used to prevent black immigrants entering Britain.

Governments, by ending discrimination, could begin to utilise the potential that exists amongst its coloured population and so benefit the society as a whole. Instead, governments are prepared to tolerate racism, unless it gets out of hand, for immigrants are a useful scapegoat for the failures of the capitalist system and because of the fear that they might lose votes from white British voters.

Given this situation there must be a reappraisal of the type of

study that is carried out on Asians in Britain. More research needs to be carried out on the effects of the environment on Asians for they are affected by many external factors as well as discrimination. It seems odd that studies should be carried out which are only concerned with Asians' ethnicity when it is being drastically changed due to the effects of the environment.

This thesis has laid down the theoretical basis for future studies of Asians in Britain. Until now data on them has been collected very sporadically. In attempting to redress this deficiency much of the existing data on Britain's Asian population was collected together and placed in the context of changes in Britain's economic, social and political life since 1959. The diverse nature and depth of this information demonstrated the need for a general survey to discover the actual changes amongst Asians over the last twenty years.

A Marxist analysis offers the best way of examining Asians' position in Britain and the changes that have occurred amongst them since 1959. It is extremely important that a full understanding of Asians' position in Britain is gained for people are often totally ignorant of even the most basic knowledge about them or their culture. Discrimination and poor race relations benefit no-one and the first step in establishing how these affect Asians is research which examines Asians in relation to the British social system. Unless such studies are conducted soon knowledge of Asians in Britain will become a collection of 'glimpses' into certain aspects of Asians' lives in specific communities and this is neither the basis for social policy nor for an understanding of minority communities and how changes take place in them.

NOTES - INTRODUCTION

1. For example, R. & C. Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlements in Britain' and Saifullah Khan, 'The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villages at Home and in Bradford'.
2. See for example Watson, 'The Chinese: Hong Kong Villagers in the British Catering Trade'.
3. In 1847 the number exceeded 200,000. Rollo, 'History of Immigration', p. 17.
4. *ibid*, p. 18.
5. *ibid*, p. 18. (Taken from The First International and After, p. 117).
6. Over 30,000 fled from Russia at this time, *ibid*, p. 19.
7. Patterson, 'The Poles: an exile community in Britain', pp. 220-1.
8. *ibid*, p. 221.
9. From these examples it does not appear to be the case that colour is the only determinant of racial discrimination or that racial discrimination is solely responsible for the position of immigrant workers.
10. London Transport Executive established liaison with Barbados Immigrant Service in 1956 to encourage West Indians to come to Britain and to take up jobs with London Transport, Rex and Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City, p. 39.

Also, Saifullah Khan, *op cit*, p. 72 notes that the textile mills in Yorkshire sent recruitment officers to the Punjab to ensure a steady flow of workers.
11. Runnymede Trust, Commonwealth Immigration: the Economic Effects, p. 5.
12. James, Sikh Children in Britain, p. 17 and Hashmi, The Pakistani Family in Britain, p. 6.
13. R. & C. Ballard, *op cit*, p. 26.
14. *ibid*, p. 41.
15. Southall S.W.P., Southall: The Fight for Our Future, pp. 6-7.
16. Allen, Bentley & Bornat, Work, Race and Immigration, p. 240.
17. *ibid*, p. 159.
18. *ibid*, p. 244.
19. Ethnicity would have been used to gain connections and to gain loans. Small businessmen would have helped each other out just as they helped each other to find jobs and houses when they first migrated to Britain.

NOTES - CHAPTER ONE

1. See for example Patterson, Dark Strangers.
2. For example, Patterson, op cit, or Wright, The Coloured Worker in British Industry.
3. The foremost proponents of this approach are Castles and Kosack, Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe.
4. The articles in J.L. Watson (ed), Between Two Cultures, are an excellent illustration of this approach.
5. Wright, op cit.
6. R. and C. Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlements in Britain', pp. 21-2.
7. The available evidence suggests that this has become less common in the 1970s due to the effects of the recession. See for example, Smith, Racial Disadvantage in Britain, pp. 210-50 and Rex and Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City, p. 140.
8. Rex and Tomlinson, *ibid*.
9. *ibid*, p.9.
10. *ibid*, p.10.
11. *ibid*, p.13.
12. *ibid*, p.14.
13. *ibid*, p.35..
14. *ibid*. p.288.
15. *ibid*, p.208.
16. *ibid*, p.92.
17. *ibid*, p.69.
18. *ibid*, p.126.
19. *ibid*, p.95.
20. *ibid*, p.97.
21. *ibid*, p.95.
22. *ibid*, p.291.
23. *ibid*, p.121.
24. *ibid*, p.95.
25. *ibid*, p.146.

26. *ibid*, p.195.
27. *ibid*, p.195.
28. *ibid*, p.95.
29. *ibid*, p.286.
30. *ibid*, p.94.
31. *ibid*, p.276.
32. For example, in the recent election for the Presidency of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) there was a 24.7% poll, Financial Times, 5th November, 1980, p, 10.
33. The 'Permenent Arms Economy' theory offers an explanation for the long period of growth after World War Two. See Kidron, Capitalism and Theory, pp.19-23.
34. Westergaard and Resler, Class in a Capitalist Society, p.318.
35. The most important barriers to social mobility stem from a person's social class. Other factors such as racial discrimination may further restrict a person's mobility but do not determine it.
36. For a critique of this theoretical position see Kidron, *op cit*, pp95-123.
37. Rex and Tomlinson periodically hold up the Empire or Britain's colonial past to explain things but they never demonstrate how it specifically affects action.
38. For example, there was an inter-union row recently over the jobs of twenty-seven ladders at the Isle of Grain power station. The ladders could be seen as more privileged than the other workers there but this does not make the situation one of an 'underclass' involved in 'class conflict' against a privileged 'upperclass'.
39. In viewing colonial immigration and the consequent destatusing of working-class and lower middle-class white British people as unique Rex and Tomlinson fail to take into account general immigration trends which are very similar to those of Asians and West Indians. Again Rex and Tomlinson's reliance on Britain's colonial past to explain something by mere reference to it is unacceptable.
40. Since classes are formed on the basis of their specific relations to the means of production it is 'idealism' which leads Rex and Tomlinson to see racist beliefs leading to the formation of classes. Ideas and beliefs have their origins in the material base of society and can take on an independent life but they cannot form the basis of classes.
41. Asians may have to 'prove' their 'right' to be in Britain but the situation in Britain is very different from the ~~apartheid~~ system in South Africa where blacks are systematically deprived of rights that whites have.
42. Rex and Tomlinson also suggest that through the education system (segregation of children, the defining of blacks as a problem by

those in authority) and the development of new belief systems by the young, an immigrant class-for-itself will develop. However, the education system cannot form the basis of classes for it is only one aspect of capitalist society and it is the latter which determines the forms the education system may take.

43. Rex and Tomlinson, op cit, p.293.
44. See for example, Evans, The Attitudes of Young Immigrants, p.15.
45. Rex and Tomlinson's data suggests a similar spread of social class as white British people especially in the working class, op cit, p.112.
46. For example, their comments on Grunwicks, op cit, p.126, suggest that violence was somehow or other racial. In fact, the violence erupted between the police and black and white trade unionists. This blatant distortion of the situation is appalling but Rex and Tomlinson find it necessary to do this to justify their belief in racial conflict.

NOTES - CHAPTER TWO

1. These approaches, unlike Marxist ones, do not regard the material base as having a dominant influence on social action. They therefore allow ideas and beliefs a determining influence free from the material environment out of which they arose.
2. R. and C. Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlements in Britain'.
3. R. Ballard, 'Ethnicity: Theory and Experience', p.200.
4. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.53.
5. ibid, p.53.
6. ibid, p.52.
7. The structural position they have entered as migrant workers has influenced the type of job they have found which in turn has influenced their ability to save and their style of life in Britain. The race relations legislation also had a profound impact on Asians' actions in Britain.
8. This was important in terms of earning power and for the quality of life they now enjoy.
9. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.25.
10. See the discussion on this in Chapter 1, pp.18-34.
11. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.36.
12. ibid, p.41
13. For example, they assert that Asians are moving into better houses and beginning to set themselves up in businesses yet this has not occurred because of factors in the environment. It is to the latter that attention must first be paid to understand Asians' actions.
14. R. Ballard, 'Family Organisation Among the Sikhs in Britain', p.17.
15. For example, see Anwar, Between Two Cultures, p.25.
16. R. Ballard, 'Ethnicity: Theory and Experience', p.196.
17. Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, p.13.
18. ibid, p.10.
19. ibid, p.17.
20. ibid, p.17.
21. ibid, p.18.
22. ibid, p.25.
23. ibid, p.27.
24. ibid, p.30.

25. *ibid*, p.34.
26. *ibid*, p.38.
27. This is incongruous with his assertion that constraints on people's behaviour through their ethnic identity are absolute.
28. Cohen, Urban Ethnicity, pp.ix-x.
29. *ibid*, p.xi.
30. *ibid*, p.xviii.
31. *ibid*, p.xxi.
32. Epstein, Ethos and Identity, p.27.
33. *ibid*, p.94.
34. *ibid*, p.109.
35. *ibid*, p.112.
36. *ibid*, p.94.
37. Brooks and Singh, 'Pivots and Presents: Asian Brokers in British Foundries'.
38. See Smith, Racial Disadvantage in Britain, p.182.
39. Brooks and Singh, *op cit*, p.102.
40. For example, see Rimmers' study, Race and Industrial Conflict, p.57.
41. Brooks and Singh, *op cit*, p.108.
42. Saifullah Khan, 'Work and Network: South Asian Women in South London'.
43. *ibid*, p.120.
44. Wallman, Ethnicity at Work, pp. 8-9.
45. This includes employees of the state for they are caught up in the general process of capitalist exploitation.
46. Wallman, *op cit*, p.10.
47. *ibid*, p.14.
48. Dahya, 'The Nature of Pakistani Ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain', p.93.
49. *ibid*, p.88.
50. *ibid*, p.91.
51. *ibid*, p.82.
52. *ibid*, p.108.
53. Many sources support this view. See for example, Smith, *op cit*, Rex and Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City, or Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, Blood on the Streets.

54. See Saifullah Khan, 'The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villagers at Home and Abroad', p.68 and p.76. Anwar reports that after Pakistan left the Commonwealth in 1973 and the Pakistan Act was passed the result was an increase in the number of dependants and that many Pakistanis were forced to change their nationality to British, Anwar, The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain, p.34.
55. R. Ballard, op cit, p.198.
56. ibid, p.199.
57. ibid, p.199.
58. See Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, pp.54-61.

NOTES - CHAPTER THREE

1. Marx and Engels, Manifesto of the Communist Party, p.40.
2. *ibid*, p.41.
3. See Westergaard and Resler, Class in a Capitalist Society, p.198.
4. *ibid*, p.143.
5. *ibid*, p.53.
6. *ibid*, p.108.
7. *ibid*, p.117.
8. *ibid*, p.112.
9. *ibid*, p.159.
10. *ibid*, p.344.
11. *ibid*, p.119.
12. *ibid*, p.119.
13. *ibid*, p.318.
14. *ibid*, p.328.
15. *ibid*, pp.92-4.
16. *ibid*, pp.75-6.
17. *ibid*, p.93.
18. *ibid*, p.95.
19. *ibid*, p.107.
20. *ibid*, p.198.
21. *ibid*, pp.351-2.
22. *ibid*, p.360.
23. Quoted in Milliband, Marxism and Politics, p.8.
24. Swingewood, Marx and Modern Social Theory, p.114.
25. Milliband, *op cit*, p.27.
26. *ibid*, p.24.
27. Swingewood, *op cit*, p.115.
28. *ibid*, p.133.
29. *ibid*, p.133.
30. The Russian revolution was successful but degenerated because it became isolated.

31. This assertion is rather dubious, to say the least.
32. Williams, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory'.
33. ibid, p.12.
34. ibid, p.12.
35. The strikes against the Industrial Relations Act in 1972 are examples of the working class moving in defence of its interests as a class. On the other hand dockers who had been important in these struggles had supported Enoch Powell a few years earlier.

NOTES - CHAPTER FOUR

1. At this general level it is necessary to include under the term 'Pakistanis' the Bangladeshi population of approximately 19,000, Smith, Racial Disadvantage in Britain, p.31.
2. *ibid*, p.31.
3. *ibid*, pp.27-8.
4. *ibid*, p.29.
5. *ibid*, p.33.
6. There are differences between African Asians and other Asian immigrants for many of the former group were expelled and did not migrate voluntarily. Consequently, there are more older people amongst African Asians' communities.
7. Smith, *op cit*, p.42.
8. Thompson, 'The Second Generation - Punjabi or English?', p.243.
9. Tambs-Lyche, 'A Comparison of Gujarati Communities in London and the Midlands', p.349.
10. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, Blood on the Streets, p.11.
11. Smith, *op cit*, p.73.
12. R. and C. Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlements in Britain', p.27.
13. James, Sikh Children in Britain, p.6.
14. John, Indian Workers' Associations in Britain, p.49.
15. Saifullah Khan, 'The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villagers at Home and in Bradford', p.60, describes the conditions of Mirpuri villagers before they emigrated to Britain.
16. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, *op cit*, p.11.
17. Tambs-Lyche, *op cit*, p.349.
18. Taylor, The Half-Way Generation, pp.17-9.
19. Allen, Bentley and Bornat, Work, Race and Immigration, p.146.
20. *ibid*, p.245.
21. *ibid*, p.251.
22. Smith, *op cit*, p.32. These religious differences can have important implications; for example, Moslem women were secluded fairly strictly in Britain at first because of the custom of Purdah.
23. James, *op cit*, p.45.
24. Jeffrey, 'Pakistani Families in Bristol', p.365.
25. Hashmi, The Pakistani Family in Britain, p.6.

26. Taylor, op cit, p.11.
27. James, op cit, p.9.
28. Wilson, Finding A Voice, p.106.
29. Anwar, Between Two Cultures, p.17.
30. Wilson, op cit, p.109.
31. James, op cit, p.79.
32. Saifullah Khan, op cit, pp.77-8, notes that amongst Mirpuri women Purdah was not strictly enforced because of their economic role and the nature of the family. However, in Bradford women at that time did not get out to work and their economic role was limited to shopping.
33. Wilson, op cit, p.6.
34. ibid, p.30.
35. Saifullah Khan, op cit, p.61.
36. John, op cit, pp.94-109, discusses Punjabi village politics in considerable detail.
37. ibid, p.95.
38. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, pp.21-2.
39. ibid, p.22.
40. As was noted earlier in Chapter 1, footnote 7, this is not a general trend.
41. Silverstone, "The Bengali Community in Tower Hamlets", p.3, suggests that Bengalees still send home remittances. On p.4 he argues that Bengalees began to settle in Britain due to their recognition that it would take longer than they had initially thought to earn enough money to guarantee a reasonable life-style in Bengal; due to the loneliness of being migrants cut off from their families; and due to the recognition of the opportunities for children in Britain. He believes that while Bangladesh-born migrants may return there appears to be "... a significant change in attitude and practice among young 'Bengalees' born or raised in the United Kingdom".
42. Saifullah Khan, op cit, p.66.
43. Dahya, 'The Nature of Pakistani Ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain', p.87.
44. Silverstone, op cit, pp.4-6.
45. Smith, op cit, p.36.
46. ibid, p.42.
47. ibid, p.336.

48. Rex and Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City, p.72.
49. Anwar, The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain, p.33.
50. Masani, 'We'll Take Care of it Ourselves', p.8.
51. Saifullah Khan, op cit, p.57.
52. Morrison, As They See It, p.14.
53. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.10.
54. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.32.
55. Dahya, op cit, p.99.
56. ibid, p.91.
57. ibid, p.82.
58. See Chapter Two, pp.60-4.
59. Tambs-Lyche, op cit, p.349.
60. See Race Today, 6th Feb., 1976, p.52; Masani, op cit, p.8; and Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.26.
61. Smith, op cit, p.210.
62. ibid, p.212.
63. ibid, p.220.
64. ibid, p.235.
65. ibid, p.250.
66. James, op cit, p.17.
67. Taylor, op cit, p.42. Anwar, op cit, p.261, believes that 67% of Pakistani households nationally are nuclear and only 33% extended.
68. Crishna, Girls of Asian Origin in Britain, p.17.
69. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.50.
70. Anwar, Between Two Cultures, p.19.
71. Smith, op cit, p.73. In Rochdale 14% of Pakistanis were self-employed, under 1% were professionals and 85% were manual workers, Anwar, The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain, p.103. In a study by Evans, The Attitudes of Young Immigrants, p.11, as many as 80% of Pakistanis had semi- or unskilled jobs.
72. Allen, Bentley and Bornat, op cit, p.75. Anwar, op cit, notes that about 64% of Pakistanis worked shifts (p.107) and of the three mills he looked at over 90% of night-shift workers were Pakistanis (p.105).
73. Smith, op cit, p.87.

74. John, op cit, p.29.
75. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.11.
76. Tambs-Lyche, op cit, p.349.
77. Allen, Bentley and Bornat, op cit, p.75.
78. Horox and Mc Redie, Our People, p.15.
79. Silverstone, op cit, p.9, believes that language difficulties may still hold some Asians back in finding better work.
80. Horox and Mc Redie, op cit, p.13.
81. Allen, Bentley and Bornat, op cit, p.93.
82. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.23.
83. Brooks, 'Railways, Railwaymen and Race', p.42.
84. Lee and Wrench, Accidents are Colour-Blind, p.17.
85. Allen, Bentley and Bornat, op cit, p.159.
86. ibid, p.151.
87. Shah, Immigrants and Employment in the Clothing Industry.
88. ibid, p.8.
89. ibid, p.39.
90. Rimmer, Race and Industrial Conflict.
91. ibid, p.63.
92. For an account of this dispute see Beetham, Transport and Turbans.
93. Taylor, op cit, p.202.
94. Morrison, op cit, p.65.
95. Allen, Bentley and Bornat, op cit, p.103.
96. Taylor, op cit, pp.188-9, though it must be kept in mind that he was writing in 1976 and that it is much more difficult to find a job now.
97. Smith, op cit, p.71.
98. Masani, op cit, p.8. Rex and Tomlinson, op cit, p.110, also reported high unemployment amongst Asians in their study of Handsworth.
99. Parekh, 'Asians in Britain: Problem or Opportunity', p.53. 27% of Asians settled in the West Midlands after migrating to Britain and recent figures show that unemployment rose by 81.5% in the past year in this area. Unemployment is therefore increasingly a problem facing Asians in this area, Financial Times, 26th Nov., 1980, p. 7.

100. CRE, Urban Deprivation, Racial Inequality and Social Policy, p.6. Anwar, op cit, p.31, notes that up till 1973 the unemployment rate for Pakistanis was lower than the general population but has since risen.
101. Horox and Mc Redie, op cit, p.15.
102. Saifullah Khan, 'Work and Network: South Asian Women in South London', p.123.
103. Wilson, op cit, p.32.
104. Smith, op cit, p.66.
105. Wilson, op cit, p.50.
106. ibid, p.50.
107. ibid, p.51.
108. ibid, p.54.
109. ibid, p.58.
110. Dhanjal, 'Sikh Women in Southall', p.114.
111. Saifullah Khan, op cit, p.133.
112. Allen, Bentley and Bornat, op cit, p.215. Of course these barriers are not simply a result of discrimination for very few people are ever promoted out of unskilled and semi-skilled jobs irregardless of race, Westergaard and Resler, Class in a Capitalist Society, p.299.
113. Runnymede Trust, The Role of Immigrants in the Labour Market, p.18; and Taylor, op cit, p.50. However, due to the recession Asian concerns have been the first to go out of business as they only have a small hold in the various markets. See, for example, Dhondy, 'Rag Trade Finish', p.369.
114. Smith, op cit, pp.92-3.
115. Allen, Bentley and Bornat, op cit, p.372.
116. Local conditions have determined the opportunities available for aspiring Asian entrepreneurs but the data points to the necessity of either arriving with capital or having owned a business in the country of origin. It is extremely difficult to arrive in Britain and 'set up shop' after a few years.
117. Brooks and Singh, 'Pivots and Presents: Asian Brokers in British Foundries'. This position was critically examined in Chapter Two, pp.55-8.
118. Smith, op cit, p.182.
119. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.41.
120. ibid, p.33.
121. ibid, p.41.

122. Saifullah Khan, 'The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villagers at Home and in Bradford', p.68.
123. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.41, note that amongst older people the reason for return is often ill-health.
124. Saifullah Khan, op cit, p.76.
125. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.13.
126. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.37.
127. James, op cit, pp.47-9.
128. Beetham, op cit, p.3.
129. ibid, p.61.
130. James, op cit, p.50.
131. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.43.
132. See Chapter Two, pp.35-40.
133. Saifullah Khan, 'Work and Network: South Asian Women in South London', p.120.
134. James, op cit, p.85.
135. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.43.
136. Saifullah Khan, 'The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villagers at Home and in Bradford', p.85.
137. James, op cit, p.78.
138. Anwar, Between Two Cultures, p.15. Also if the father works on shifts the eldest son will be important.
139. Saifullah Khan, op cit, p.86.
140. Anwar, op cit, p.39.
141. Taylor, op cit, p.112.
142. Morrison, op cit, p.73.
143. Masani, op cit, pp.8-9.
144. Anwar, op cit, p.50.
145. Masani, op cit, p.8.
146. Parekh, op cit, p.43.
147. ibid, p.42.
148. Rose, 'Learning the British Way', p.7. He notes that in Southall some Asian youth are beginning to go about with 'Rasta' boys and 'Soul' boys from Afro-Caribbean background.

149. Morrison, op cit, p.31.
150. ibid, p.73. By this Morrison does not mean groups of friends walking together but the gang syndrome - rowdy, fighting other gangs, etc.
151. Crishna, op cit, p.37.
152. Wilson, op cit, p.110.
153. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.13.
154. Masani, op cit, p.9.
155. Race Today, April/May 1988, pp.66-8.
156. Anwar, op cit, p.39; Taylor, op cit, p.216; and Thompson, op cit, p.242.
157. Saifullah Khan, 'Work and Network: South Asian Women in South London', p.133.
158. Taylor, op cit, p.101, writes of Hindu boys: "The young men ... had no knowledge of caste, the religion's most important aspect".
159. Tambs-Lyche, op cit, pp.350-1.
160. Saifullah Khan, op cit, p.120.
161. Taylor, op cit, p.102, argues this point.
162. Evans, op cit, p.16.
163. Anwar, op cit, p.25.
164. ibid, p.25.
165. Taylor, op cit, p.141.
166. ibid, p.136; Evans, op cit, p.17; and Anwar, op cit, p.30.
167. James, op cit, p.83.
168. Saifullah Khan, 'The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villagers at Home and in Bradford', pp.73-4.
169. Taylor, op cit, p.53.
170. ibid, p.56.
171. Evans, op cit, p.33.
172. Saifullah Khan, 'Work and Network: South Asian Women in South London', p.120.
173. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.37.
174. Beetham, op cit, p.7.
175. Taylor, op cit, p.54.

176. Anwar, The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain, p.49, argues that in Rochdale the Mosque plays an important role in transmitting religion and culture, and Moslems in general have been more successful in maintaining their religion.
177. Mc Pherson and Gaitskell, Immigrants and Employment, p.10.
178. Runnymede Trust, 'Trade Unions and Immigrant Workers', p.29.
179. Mc Pherson and Gaitskell, op cit, p.5.
180. Ashtiany, Britain's Migrant Workers, p.14.
181. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.14.
182. Runnymede Trust, op cit, p.34.
183. Sillen, Bentley and Bornat, op cit, p.240.
184. In a recent study Brooks and Singh, op cit, discuss a type of 'padrone' system but this does not fit the general trend towards increased unionisation.
185. Rimmer, op cit, p.40.
186. Allen and Smith, 'Race and Ethnicity in Class Formation, p.48.
187. Runnymede Trust, op cit, p.29.
188. Masani, op cit, p.8.
189. Rimmer, op cit, p.62, describes how the Amalgamated Union of Engineering and Foundry Workers (AEF), held token strikes to show disapproval of the management conceding demands to Asian workers.
190. Allen, Bentley and Bornat, op cit, p.242.
191. ibid, p.241.
192. ibid, pp.350-1.
193. Bentley, 'Industrial Conflict, Strikes and Black Workers'; p.137.
194. Rimmer, op cit, p.60.
195. ibid, pp.57-8.
196. Anwar, 'Asian Participation in the October, 1974 General Election', p.376.
197. CRE, 'Participation of Ethnic Minorities in the General Election, October 1974', p.22.
198. Anwar, op cit, pp.379-80.
199. CRE, op cit, pp.22-3. Rex and Tomlinson, op cit, p.83, found that in Handsworth 14.4% of householders were very interested in the affairs of the homeland, 26.8% fairly interested, 37.7% not very interested and 17.7% not at all interested.
200. CRE, op cit, p.28.

201. Race Today, April/May, 1977, pp.66-8.
202. John, op cit, p.45.
203. ibid, p.47.
204. ibid, p.110.
205. ibid, p.125.
206. Beetham, op cit, p.7.
207. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.54.
208. These organisations die down a little after the immediate issue has been raised but they do persist afterwards. Sometimes their function may change; for example, the Southall Asian Youth Movement was set up to protest about the murder of an Asian youth in 1976. This movement still exists and still goes on demonstrations but it also serves as the representative of Asian youth and the premises it established are used as a youth club, Masani, op cit, p.8.

NOTES - CHAPTER FIVE

1. Foot, The Rise of Enoch Powell, pp.16-7, discusses the political debate over the British Nationality Act.
2. For example, the textile industry faced with competition from abroad, had to start 24-hour shifts to remain competitive and in so doing pushed up the companies' profits.
3. Foot, Immigration and Race in British Politics, p.134.
4. *ibid*, p.135.
5. *ibid*, p.137.
6. *ibid*, p.141.
7. *ibid*, p.159.
8. *ibid*, p.194. Also, see Rex and Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City, p.61.
9. Foot, *op cit*, pp.141-2.
10. *ibid*, p.234. See also R. and C. Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlements in Britain', p.55.
11. Rollo, 'History of Immigration', pp.17-21.
12. Institute of Race Relations (IRR), Police Against Black People, pp.13-17.
13. The 1971 Immigration Act changed the status of most Commonwealth immigrants to that of 'aliens'. A 'non-patrial' Commonwealth citizen has no rights to settle or bring in dependants. He or she needs a work permit for a specific job in a specific period (usually twelve months). The distinction between 'patrials' and 'non-patrials' virtually means white and non-white. See Moore, Racism and Black Resistance, pp.33-4.
14. Rex and Tomlinson, *op cit*, p.61, believe that right-wing Labour and trade union leaders gave credence to the belief that immigrants 'milked' the welfare state.
15. Newspapers in particular have printed stories which have been biased against Asian immigrants. The most infamous case was the Sun's coverage of the arrival of a few Malawi Asians in 1976. The Sun stated that one of the immigrants had come to Britain to educate his six children and to have an operation on the National Health Service. Politicians, such as Enoch Powell, also manipulated the press to create a bigger impact for their views and the press has at times been too willing to publish unsubstantiated stories if they are likely to boost sales. See the study by Smithies and Fiddick, Enoch Powell on Immigration.
16. See, Evans, Publish and be Damned.
17. For example, stories about Asians coming to Britain and staying in hotels before moving on to council houses. Local councils have caused a fuss over this issue and recently Hillingdon took this

17. issue to court because they are required to house homeless people, who arrive in their borough, Evening Standard, August 14th, 1980, p.3.
18. Parekh, 'Asians in Britain: Problem or Opportunity', p.53, notes that industries such as textiles are declaring redundancies and that unemployment is rising faster amongst Asian workers than amongst white British workers. In general more small firms are declaring redundancies than large ones and it was small firms in which many Asians found work.
19. From the limited available evidence more Asians appear to be turning to councils for houses and this is probably because they cannot afford to buy one, Smith, Racial Disadvantage in Britain, p.250.
20. Of course, this general pattern is influenced by particular councils' policies towards Asians. Some, such as Tower Hamlets, have tended to offer Asians the most run-down property which other people have refused. Other councils have pursued a policy of dispersing them. In either case the possibilities of creating small Asian enclaves will be restricted.
21. Parekh, op cit, p.42.
22. Sivanandan argues that Asians' values were similar to those of bourgeois society in Race, Class and the State, p.360.
23. James, Sikh Children in Britain, p.68, argues that once parents' own ambitions were frustrated they transferred them to their children.
24. Morrison, As They See It, p.31. Rose, 'Learning the British Way', p.7, notes that Asian boys in Southall are beginning to go about with West Indian boys.
25. Evans, Attitudes of Young Immigrants, p.20.
26. Saifullah Khan, 'Work and Network: South Asian Women in South London', p.124.
27. ibid, p.133.
28. Wilson, Finding A Voice, p.32.
29. Such is the need for money that Asian women take jobs wherever they can find them. All-female workforces are only preferred where this is feasible but this restriction will hold less amongst the second generation. Homeworking is less possible because of the fall in demand of the rag-trade which is the largest employer. But since money is still needed Asian women will have to go out to work.
30. Wilson, op cit, p.51.
31. Examples such as Grunwicks, Fitters and Chix spring to mind here.
32. Wilson, op cit, p.58.
33. In general this is an important point for women, like youth who are working, do have an economic independence which they would not have had in Asia. Women and youth both know that in family disputes there is the possibility that they can leave which removes an important sanction elders held in rural areas.

34. Dhanjal, 'Sikh Women in Southall', p.114.
35. Membership of the National Front is now on the decline but membership of other fascist parties has slightly increased, Socialist Worker, July 10th, 1980, p.2.
36. In recent cases councillors have offered homeless migrants money to return to their country of origin because it was 'cheaper' than housing them in Britain. Attempts have been made to change the laws which make it mandatory for councils to house homeless people, Evening Standard, August 14th 1980, p.3.
37. The state has fostered racism through acts controlling immigration and through race relations acts which are widely accepted as having no 'teeth'.
38. Capitalists do this most obviously through their control of the media; for example, 90% of all national newspapers are controlled by six companies.
39. Police have consistently allowed racists and fascists to sell their literature, hold meetings and have demonstrations which have deliberately tried to intimidate immigrants, Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, Blood on the Streets, pp.41-6.
40. Mrs. Thatcher offered these views in an interview on television in 1978. Quoted in, Runnymede Trust, A Report for 1978, p.4.
41. For example, following the Sun and other newspapers' reports on the Malawi Asians there was a general increase in the level of racist violence, Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.51.
42. Some articles have appeared denouncing certain racist individuals and parties but the tendency is for the press to be biased against immigrants thus lending credence to the views which it is supposed to be exposing or denouncing.
43. McCann, The British Press and Northern Ireland, p.24.
44. Under SUS (Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act 1824) it is an arrestable offence if a police officer 'suspects' a person of being 'about' to commit a crime. 'SUS' has been used against West Indian youth in particular. 44% of arrests on 'SUS' in London in 1977 were of black youth who are only 2.8% of the total population, IRR, op cit, p.41.
45. Anwar, Between Two Cultures, p.19.
46. For example, John, IWAs in Britain, p.110, notes that Indians were increasingly doing with less help from each other.
47. Evans, op cit, p.25.
48. Because there is less pressure on Asians in Britain to support individuals or groups in British elections they have the same opportunity as white British workers to vote for who they wish. That Asians are doing so is suggested by the fall in the vote for Labour in general and examples such as Rochdale where 50% of Anwar's respondents voted for Liberal, 46% for Labour and 4% for Conservative in the last General Election. Anwar, The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain, p.155.

49. Asians have mainly stood as Labour candidates in local elections. There have also been a few Asian Conservative candidates and a few revolutionary socialist ones.
50. Parekh, op cit, p.43.
51. Marriage partners should traditionally come from different villages or areas but chain migration has resulted in settlements of people from the same area, Anwar, Between Two Cultures, p.25.
52. This seems to be especially the case amongst working-class Asians. For example, Anwar, op cit, p.34, found that they were less likely to accept arranged marriages than middle-class Asian youth.
53. Asian films dwell on this theme and in them the end sometimes involves suicide. It also occupies a lot of debate amongst Asians.
54. Moslems have been most successful in maintaining their religion but they have not done so without difficulty. Anwar, The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain, p.159, notes that Moslems have to make an extra effort to do so and for those that do not want to conform it is much easier.
55. This explains why there was a resurgence in religious observance when dependants first began to arrive in Britain and why it then fell away. First-generation Asians did try to maintain life much as it had been in rural Asia but the way of life in Britain made it impossible.
56. For example, James, op cit, p.51, notes that Asian boys and girls are demanding the right to wear fashionable clothes. Silverstone, "The Bengali Community in Tower Hamlets", p.10, notes that drinking takes place amongst Moslems. Evans, op cit, p.15, believes that younger Asians are less bothered about prohibitions on their eating habits. Anwar, Between Two Cultures, p.39, argues that Asian girls and women are demanding more say in decisions and greater freedom.
57. Asians may visit their families but they recognise that they will not return permanently.
58. R. and C. Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlements in Britain', p.34.
59. Evans, op cit, p.15.
60. ibid, p.25.
61. For example, Asian youth organisations have taken advantage of grants and schemes while maintaining their independence from them, Masani, 'We'll Take Care of it Ourselves', p.9.
62. Foot, op cit, p.135, and p.142.
63. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.41, note that ill-health is often the reason for Asians returning to their country of origin.
64. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, p.37.
65. ibid, p.10.

66. For example, Dahya, 'The Nature of Pakistani Ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain', R. and C. Ballard, op cit, and Brooks and Singh, 'Pivots and Presents: Asian Brokers in British Foundries'.
67. Involvement in unions and strikes suggests that their interests are opposed to capitalists and instead lie with other workers. Asians' support for other workers on strike and joint action with other workers in disputes also indicate an awareness of their position in the working class. When Asians do take strike action they do so as workers and as Allen, Bentley and Bornat's study, Work, Race and Immigration, p.240, noted, Asians are well aware of the political nature of unions.
68. During strikes at Grunwicks, Fitters and Chix, Asian women have shown themselves to be aware of their position as workers and determined to defend their interests through gaining the support of other workers.
69. For example, Westergaard and Resler point out that while educational opportunity has been expanded this has not involved a major redistribution of opportunities between children of different classes, Class in a Capitalist Society, p.324.
70. Rose, 'Learning the British Way', p.7.
71. This process is now beginning to happen. For example, in London's East End the rag trade is collapsing and the smaller firms which are mainly Asian are being forced to close down. In the West Midlands where there is a high concentration of Pakistanis the level of unemployment has risen dramatically recently, Financial Times, Nov. 26th, 1980, p.7. Also, the industries in which Asians mainly found employment in the Midlands have been badly hit by the recession. In 1979 employment in textiles was falling by 13%, 13% in metals and 9% in clothing and footwear. Further, Asians in service industries will become harder hit as the recession spreads from manufacturing to service industries, Financial Times, 31st Oct., 1980, p.1.
72. For example, in the current recession the Manpower Services Commission believes that unemployment will be at least as high as its present level for the next four years, Financial Times, 20th Nov., 1980, p.13.
73. Anwar, The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain, p.117.
74. Foot, op cit, p.140.
75. Newspapers have often given this impression; for example, the Daily Express headline in May 1976 was "Asian Influx Will Swamp Us".
76. Racial violence and stories about immigrants in the press have been shown to be linked. See Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.51.
77. In some workplaces such as Imperial Typewriters or in the examples in Rimmer's study, Race and Industrial Conflict, white workers walked through Asian workers' picket lines but in the latter case this was not necessarily due to racism.

78. In some cases where there were racists it obviously might have. Meth, Here to Stay, p.9, notes that inflammatory speeches reported in the media poisoned the atmosphere in some factories.
79. Governments, employers and capitalists are never too keen to admit that their policies are directly responsible for problems. Instead lazy workers in Britain, scroungers on the welfare state, immigrants or 'slave labour' abroad are blamed.
80. The disputes at Grunwicks, Futters and Chix have all been well supported by white British workers.
81. This does not mean that they might not arise in the future for in a deepening recession that is a possibility.
82. At Woolfs' in Southall in 1965-66 Asian workers showed they were gaining an increased awareness of how to organise a strike. R. Woolf and Co. was a rubber factory supplying components to the car industry.
83. It must be noted however, that Asians could face extra problems if an official is racist.
84. For example, the massive demonstrations against racial violence in 1976 in Southall or London's East End.
85. R. and C. Ballard, op cit, p.37, note that Asians from East Africa led the revival in religion and the wearing of traditional clothes for they were used to being a minority. However, they do not take into account that these Asians had formed a middle-class community in East Africa and could afford the time and money to do so whereas the majority of Asians in Britain are working-class and cannot afford to act in this way.
86. A working-class consciousness is an awareness of the position of the working class and taking action to defend the interests of this class.
87. Important matters of culture have become determined by the interaction of material and ideological factors.

1. See, for example, Mayer's discussion of politics in the Dewas electoral situation in 'The Significance of Quasi-Groups in the Study of Complex Societies'.
2. See, for example, John, IWAs in Britain, p.83, and Omvedt, We Will Smash This Prison, pp.67-75.
3. Anwar, The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain, pp.23-4.
4. John, op cit, p.50.
5. ibid, p.48.
6. Anwar, op cit, p.179.
7. John, op cit, p.85.
8. ibid, p.85.
9. For example, in the Bengalee community in London's East End the 'traditional' middle-class leadership was ignored and people took direct action themselves, Race Today, June 1976, p.125. While youth led the way their parents increasingly supported their actions, Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, Blood on the Streets, pp.55-6.
10. John, op cit, p.85.
11. Jordan and Mackie, 'Growing Militancy in the Pit of Disillusion', p.19, note the development of Asian youth's own organisations in London and Bradford and other towns and cities with large Asian populations. See also Masani, 'We'll Take Care of it Ourselves', p.8.
12. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.54.
13. John, op cit, p.47.
14. In IWAs the split over the attitude to the Labour Party was an early example of political factions. More recently, for example, Bengalee organisations in London's East End had internal disputes over whether to support initiatives taken by the Anti-Nazi League (ANL).
15. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, pp.108-10 and Parekh, 'Asians in Britain: Problem or Opportunity', p.43.
16. For example, Bengalees in London's East End formed the Bengalee Housing Action Group (BHAG), because of their housing problems, Race Today, March 1976, pp.52-3.
17. Taylor, The Half-Way Generation, p.56.
18. Heineman, The Politics of the Powerless, p.193.
19. Taylor, op cit, p.56.
20. John notes that IWA politics involved faction fighting for personal power over non-controversial issues, John, op cit, p.85. Hiro

20. believes that the leadership of IWAs was split between moderate entrepreneurs and political radicals from the start, in Rex and Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City, p.267.
21. IWAs vary in militancy; for example, Birmingham IWA refused to endorse two Labour candidates in the 1966 General election, while other IWAs have never done this. See John, op cit, pp.159-67.
22. On demonstrations, such as those against the National Front in Southall in April, 1979, older Asians were very much in evidence.
23. For example, the Southall Youth Movement (SYM) and the Bangladesh Youth Association (BYA) were both formed because of the anger at racist attacks. Once this anger died down they became youth welfare organisations, Masani, op cit, p.8.
24. Jordan and Mackie, op cit, p.19.
25. The fact that 'scabbing' often occurs serves to demonstrate this point.
26. Clarke and Clements, Trade Unions Under Capitalism, p.227.
27. For example, the strike at Woolfs' rubber factory involved many mistakes and misunderstandings. During the Steelworkers' strike in 1980 the Steelworkers were often unsure about how to organise pickets at first for they had not been involved in industrial action for many years, Socialist Worker, 12th January, 1980, p.3.
28. For example, Jewish immigration was opposed in the 1890s and as recently as 1955 the Midlands TGWU and the TUC Congress called for a halt to immigration, Beetham, Transport and Turbans, p.14.
29. Runnymede Trust, 'Trade Unions and Immigrant Workers', p.29.
30. For example, the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers (NUTGW) has been active in the rag trade in London's East End and the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) has been active in the catering industry in London. See Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.34 and Runnymede Trust, op cit, p.29.
31. Marsh, Anatomy of a Strike, p.50.
32. Allegations that this occurred may be true in the smaller workplaces where Asians found work at first. Although some data suggests this still occurs (Brooks and Singh, 'Pivots and Presents: Asian Brokers in British Foundries'), it is probably only true for a very small number of workplaces.
33. The examples of Grunwicks and Imperial Typewriters come to mind here.
34. For example, during the Steel Workers' strike in 1980 the union did not pay the workers any strike pay even though the union had £11 million assets and investments. The interests of union bureaucrats and workers on strike are very different for the latter are concerned only with winning their demand. Union bureaucrats, however, try to compromise so as to appear responsible and working for the public good. They do not challenge the system which exploits workers but instead try to make this exploitation 'fairer'.
35. Some Asians joined the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) when they came to Britain. John, op cit, pp.76-78 believes that

35. Indians did so because it was easier to joint it than the Communist Party of India (ICP) which they could then have joined when they returned to India. They do not appear to have been very active and many were expelled after the Sino/Soviet split for taking a Maoist position. Their membership of other groups such as the extreme left has been small but they have demonstrated their sympathy to this type of politics mainly because of the left's anti-racist work.
36. Moore, Racism and Black Resistance, pp.17-38.
37. Foot, Stop the Cuts, pp.18-21.
38. Gordon, 'Black in Britain', p.71.
39. Rex and Tomlinson, op cit, p.87.
40. CRE, 'Participation of Ethnic Minorities in the General Election, October 1974', pp.31-2.
41. ibid, p.28.
42. Rex and Tomlinson, op cit, p.268.
43. While these organisations are government-sponsored successive governments have pursued racist policies. This contradiction has resulted in these organisations not being able to fulfill the functions they are meant to. Some go as far as to accuse the CRE of helping the government to move from institutional racism to domestic neo-colonialism. See Sivanandan, Race, Class and the State, p.365.
44. Jordan and Mackie, op cit, p.19.
45. At a conference in London's East End Asian youth criticised David Lane, chairperson of the CRE, who was the main speaker. Such criticism is commonly expressed by Asian youth, Race Today, April/May 1977, pp.66-8.
46. CARD was set up in December 1964 after a visit to Britain by Martin Luther King, Rex and Tomlinson, op cit, p.40.
47. Heineman, op cit, p.96.
48. ibid, p.96.
49. ibid, p.93.
50. ibid, p.94.
51. ibid, p.94.
52. CARD collapsed in December 1967 after conflict within the Executive Committee, Rex and Tomlinson, op cit, p.41.
53. Between these times the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism (CARF) was formed. It acted mainly as an information and research group. Although it established some groups and led some activities it did not make a mass appeal such as the ANL did. CARF is not discussed because data on it is very scarce and because this chapter is concerned with an explanation of the main changes that

53. have occurred amongst Asians in the political field since 1959. In December 1967 the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) was established and although it has mobilised people around issues such as racist immigration laws it has not in itself become a major political force. It has been successful in researching and publicising issues that concern immigrants and in has successfully taken up specific cases of injustice against immigrants.
54. Apart from marching through areas with a large proportion of immigrants racist and fascist groups organised attacks on workers, for example, at the Charrington bottling plant in London's East End, Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.81.
55. Evans, Attitudes of Young Immigrants, p.15.
56. Asian youth increasingly see the struggle against racism in terms of 'fighting for their rights', Evans, op cit, p.25.
57. In his article, 'Industrial Conflict, Strikes and Black Workers', Bentley points out that ethnicity is hidden in official statistics and that the media tend to play up race in disputes involving coloured workers.
58. Beetham, op cit.
59. In 1967 a split led to the Akali Dal making a formal electoral alliance with the Left CP and minor left-wing parties in India. Akali Dal is stronger both in rural areas and the state as a whole than the other Dal which made arrangements with the right C.P., John, op cit, p.83.
60. This dispute has been studied in detail by Marsh, op cit.
61. ibid, p.24.
62. ibid, pp.48-50.
63. Runnymede Trust, op cit, pp.30-34.
64. Union officials are caught between representing their members and compromising with management. In general they are more conservative than the workers and usually only take action after demands from the workers. This position arises from the role trade union officials see for themselves which is not to change the capitalist wage-labour system but to gain a 'fair deal' for the workers within it. See, for example, Rimmer's discussion of the relation between union officials and managers in some foundries where the former took action in support of the management's discrimination of Asian workers, Rimmer, op cit, pp.60-3.
65. Asian women who are forbidden to work outside of the home, women with children and women who speak no English can only do homework. Men who speak no English are also restricted to unskilled jobs but women are the most captive workforce.
66. Mrs. Desai, one of the leaders of the Grunwick strike described union support as being like 'honey on the elbow - you can smell it, see it and feel it - but you can never taste it', Socialist Worker, Grunwick, p.16.

67. Wilson, Finding A Voice, p.63, describes how the leaders of the Grunwicks dispute would go round women's houses arguing with husbands, father and brothers about why women should be on the picket line.
68. Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.58.
69. Southall Socialist Workers Party, Southall: The Fight For Our Future, p.2.
70. For example, even up to the 'skinhead' era of 1970 when 'Paki-bashing' became the local sport for white youth the result of mass meetings held by the Asian communities was that their leaders talked with police chiefs and MPs.
71. In London's East End the Bangladesh Youth Association and the Bangladesh Youth Front are new and very active groups, Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, op cit, p.108. Jordan and Mackie, op cit, p.19, mention other similar groups in Bradford, Manchester, Nottingham and Leicester.

NOTES - CHAPTER SEVEN

1. For example, in some areas Asians have become involved in activities such as mass demonstrations whereas this has not happened in other areas.
2. It is generally accepted that workers built up a strong shop steward organisation during the 1960s which enabled them to take strike action quickly and effectively, Clarke, 'Introduction' to Trade Unions Under Capitalism, pp.8-10.
3. This does not mean that companies simply paid out what workers asked for. Workers did have to take strike action but it was generally for a short period. Companies would not have paid out demands which seriously threatened their profits but recognised that they had to pay out more as expectations had risen in general.
4. Westergaard and Resler, Class in a Capitalist Society, p.318.
5. Foot, Stop The Cuts, p.10.
6. Foot, Workers Against Racism, pp.8-10.
7. Parekh, 'Asians in Britain', p.53.
8. Evans, Attitudes of Young Immigrants, pp.15-17.
9. Evans, ibid, p.17, and Anwar, Between Two Cultures, pp.30-5.
10. Dhanjal, 'Sikh Women in Southall', p.114, Wilson, Finding A Voice, p.63.
11. While some studies such as R. and C. Ballards' study of Sikhs in Leeds or Saifullah Khan's study of Mirpuris in Bradford have produced interesting data there are many other studies which have produced data of dubious value for it has amounted to little more than the authors' impressions and empirical observations of people. The unifying theme in these studies is a belief that ethnicity is the underlying principle of the groups that they are studying and consequently the analysis does not go beyond the observable features of these groups. Examples of this type of study are Pettigrew, 'Some Notes on the Social System of the Sikh Jats', Crishna, Girls of Asian Origin in Britain, Taylor, The Half-Way Generation, Dahya, 'The Nature of Pakistani Ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain', Tambs-Lyche, 'A Comparison of Gujarati Communities in London and the Midlands'.
12. Castles and Kosack, Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe, examine the similarities between immigrant workers in different European countries by looking at immigrant workers' positions in the different sectors of the country's social structure.
13. In Southall Asians constitute 80% of the local unemployed but only 46% of the local population. And of the unemployed about half are under twenty-five years of age, Masani, 'We'll Take Care of it Ourselves', p.8. In Bradford in 1978 Asians were 9% of the population while the unemployment rate for non-whites was 8.4%. In 1980 the non-white unemployment rate was heading for 15%. The city's District Trends report for 1980 noted that: "Asians are more likely to be unemployed and any increase

13. in overall unemployment will tend to hit Asians harder", Jordan and Mackie, 'Growing Militancy in the Pit of Disillusion', p.19. The Cambridge Economic Policy Group have predicted that unemployment will touch three million by mid-1981, Marketing, 'When Unemployment Clouds the Horizon', Marketing, 10th December, 1980, p.19.
14. Roy Jenkins made this point, "If ... job opportunities, educational facilities, housing and environmental conditions are all poor, the next generation will grow up less well-equipped to deal with the difficulties facing them. The wheel then comes full circle, as the second generation find themselves trapped in poor jobs and poor housing. If at each stage of this process an element of racial discrimination enters in, then an entire group of people are launched on a vicious downward spiral of deprivation". Quoted in Sivanandan, Race, Class and the State, p.367.
15. Rose, 'Learning the British Way', p.7.
16. For example, in London's East End some Asians who had hoped to make a living from the Rag Trade have decided to return to Asia because of the recession in it. They were late-comers to Britain and have very few ties here. Reported in 'East London Advertiser', March 21st, 1980, p.1.
17. Masani reports that West Indians have shared the facilities of the Asian youth movement in Southall, Masani, op cit, p.8. Rose reports that some Asians are adopting the styles of West Indians, Rose, op cit, p.7, while Jordan and Mackie, op cit, p.19, report that a number of young West Indians belong to the Southall Youth Movement.
18. Evans, op cit, p.25.
19. Anwar, op cit, p.25 and p.39.
20. See for example, Silverstone, "The Bengalee Community in Tower Hamlets", pp.5-6.
21. For example, amongst the Bengalees in London's East End (one of the last groups to begin to settle permanently) it is estimated that there are only 3,500 dependants still seeking to enter Britain. Figures for other Asian groups are much smaller for they began to settle in Britain much earlier, Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, Blood on the Streets, p.12.
22. Moore, Racism and Black Resistance, p.28.

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